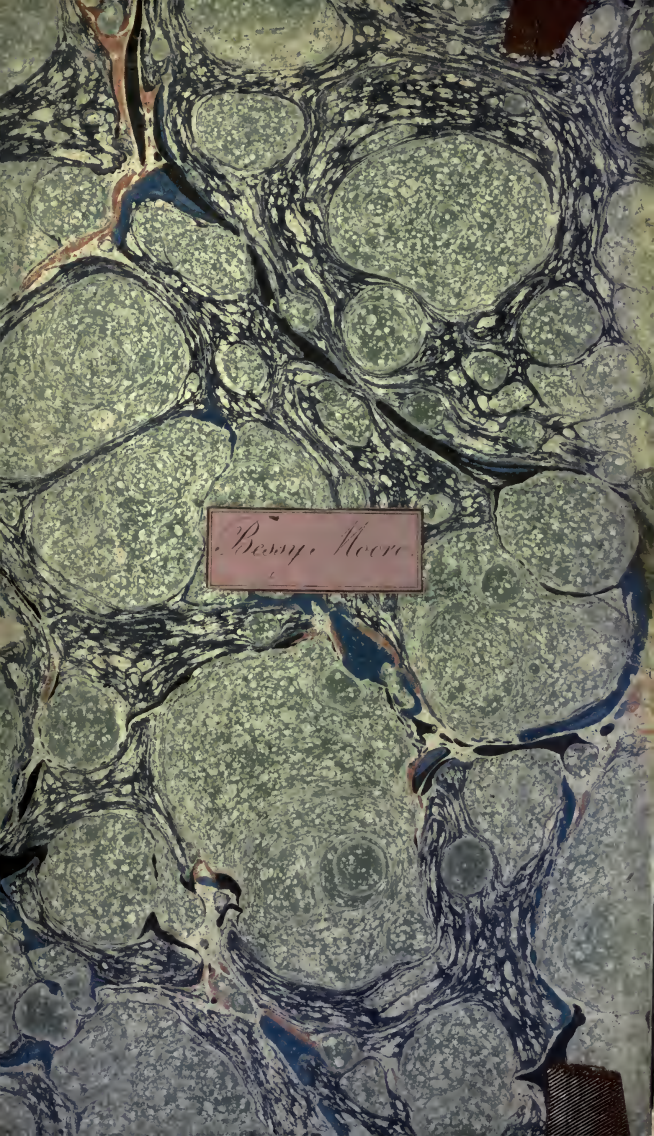


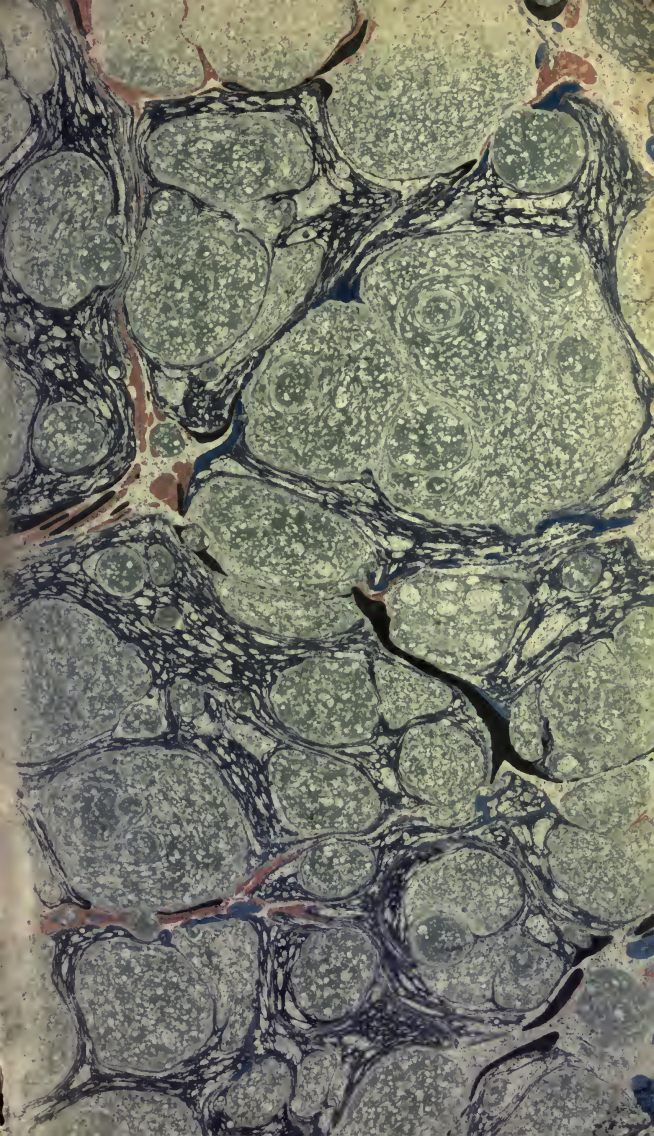
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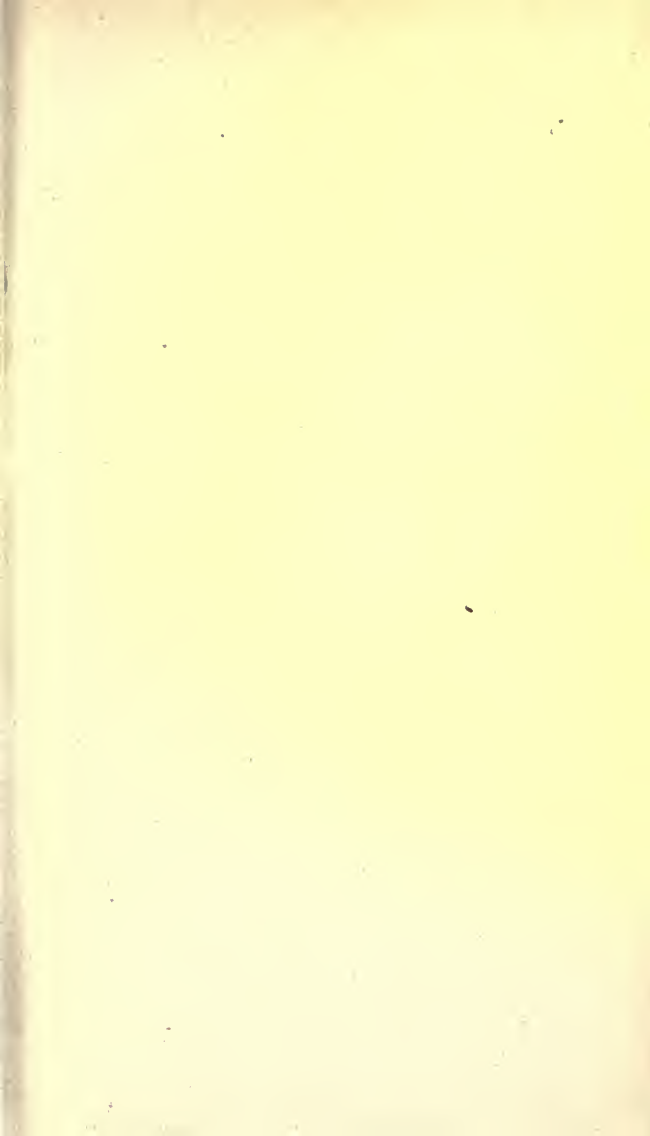


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The background is a complex marbled paper pattern. It features large, irregular, light greenish-grey circular or oval shapes that resemble stone or organic cells. These are separated by a dense network of dark blue and black veins. Interspersed within these veins are thin, flowing lines of reddish-brown and yellowish-tan. The overall effect is a rich, textured, and somewhat chaotic visual field.

Bessy Moore











SUSANNA CENTLIVRE

GRAVED BY FAIRMAN, FROM AN ORIGINAL PICTURE.
PUBLISHED BY LONGMAN & CO.

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THE
BRITISH THEATRE;

OR,

A COLLECTION OF PLAYS,

WHICH ARE ACTED AT

THE THEATRES ROYAL,

DRURY LANE, COVENT GARDEN, AND HAYMARKET.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOKS.

WITH

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL REMARKS,

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

IN TWENTY-FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. XI.

BUSY BODY.

WONDER.

BOLD STROKE FOR A WIFE.

GEORGE BARNWELL.

FATAL CURIOSITY.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

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WILLIAM SAVAGE, PRINTER,
BEDFORD BURY.

THE
BUSY BODY;

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

By MRS. CENTLIVRE.

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRES ROYAL

DRURY LANE AND COVENT GARDEN.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

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SAVAGE AND EASINGWOOD,
PRINTERS, LONDON.

REMARKS.

When a man follows the occupation of a woman, or a woman the employment of a man, they are both unpleasing characters, if they are guided in their pursuits by choice. But, if necessity has ruled their destinies, they are surely objects of compassion ; and mercy should be granted to their want of skill in their irregular departments.

The female author of “ The Busy Body,” was driven to a poet’s calling, by the hardships of her fate.

Mrs. Centlivre’s father, was the possessor of a considerable estate at Holbeach, in Lincolnshire, at the time of the restoration ; but, as he was a zealous dissenter, he was, of course, persecuted for the political opinions which adhered to this church : his estate was at length confiscated, and he, with his family, obliged to seek refuge in Ireland.

The authoress of this play was at twelve years of age an orphan : and at fifteen, being persecuted on account of her poverty and her beauty, as much as her father had been for his religious and republican principles, she pursued his example ; and, flying from her enemies, took shelter in England. England had not the virtue to protect her, either from want or from dishonour. A student of Cambridge met her, a forlorn traveller, on her way to London ; and this

young man, being of an engaging mind and person, prevailed on her (destitute as she was) to accompany him to the university in man's attire, as his companion and friend.

The haste, with which this intimacy was formed, was but the forerunner of as hasty a separation. She, however, remained long enough at the college to learn experience, and to improve her taste for literature.

The Biographers of Mrs. Centlivre have not said where she met with her second lover; but it is certain she had the prudence to make him her husband: She had the affliction, likewise, to be a widow, before she was eighteen.

Her deceased husband was a gentleman, and the nephew of Sir Stephen Fox. Her next husband was also a gentleman;—for she married; not long after her widowhood, a Mr. Carrol, who was killed in a duel the year following;—and, once more, she became a widow.

It was now discreet to think on other support than such as had depended on the lives of two young husbands, who, having offended their family by a contract of marriage, the mere effect of love, had, on their demise, left their relict in the most indigent circumstances. Mrs. Carrol became an actress;—but, notwithstanding her youth, her wit, and her beauty, she was unsuccessful in that profession.

To avoid the alternative, female profligacy, or domestic drudgery, she now encountered the masculine enterprise of an author. She wrote eighteen plays, of

which, three will preserve her memory:—these are, “The Wonder,” “Bold Stroke for a wife,” and the present comedy.

In this period of her writing, (and, no doubt, its concomitant, fasting,)—the reader will not be surprised that Mrs. Carrol should marry a third time.—She now united herself to a man, whose very title promised her protection from that ancient and modern visitation upon authors, denominated—hunger. Mr. Centlivre was “yeoman to the mouth,” or principal cook to queen Anne. Mrs. Centlivre’s forecast in these her last nuptials did her judgment more honour than her ambition. She died in 1723, of a disorder, neither so lingering, nor so painful, as starving.

This comedy of the “Busy Body,” which has survived one hundred years, was, by the actors, who performed in it, expected to die on the first night.

The foresight of actors, in regard to the success of new dramas, has been long out of credit—unjustly so—for, although their predictions are not infallible, actors are as frequently prophetic, upon the life and death of a play, as the physician upon that of his patient.

The part of Marplot is the sole support of this comedy.—A most powerful protector in all, that original character can give. The busy curiosity, the officious good temper, and the sheepish cowardice, of this mean atom of human nature, are so excellently delineated, that he allures the attention and expectation of the auditors, and makes them bear with pa-

tience, the dull, and common place dramatic persons which surround him.

Authors of the past time, and those of the present, have had very different notions of the ties which subsist between parents and children. It is shocking to see how tyranny on one part, and deceit on the other, disgrace most of our old play books. It is to be hoped, that these portraits of unnatural vice have been daubed with such hideous colours, they have reclaimed all fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters; and left to the writers of these days, to paint from nature—parental and filial love.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

	COVENT GARDEN.	DRURY LANE.
SIR GEORGE AIRY	<i>Mr. Brunton.</i>	<i>Mr. Barrymore.</i>
SIR FRANCIS GRIPE	<i>Mr. Munden.</i>	<i>Mr. Dowton.</i>
SIR JEALOUS TRAFFIC	<i>Mr. Emery.</i>	<i>Mr. Dormer.</i>
CHARLES	<i>Mr. Claremont.</i>	<i>Mr. Holland.</i>
MARPLOT	<i>Mr. Lewis.</i>	<i>Mr. Bannister.</i>
WHISPER	<i>Mr. Farley.</i>	<i>Mr. De Camp.</i>
WILLIAM	<i>Mr. Harley.</i>	
THOMAS	<i>Mr. Abbot.</i>	
JAMES	<i>Mr. Truman.</i>	
FRANK	<i>Mr. Lewiss.</i>	
HARRY	<i>Mr. Platt.</i>	
MIRANDA	<i>Mrs. Glover.</i>	<i>Miss Duncan.</i>
ISABINDA	<i>Mrs. Beverly.</i>	<i>Mrs. Scott.</i>
SCENTWELL	<i>Miss Cox.</i>	<i>Miss Tidswell.</i>
PATCH	<i>Mrs. Mattocks.</i>	<i>Miss Pope.</i>

THE
BUSY BODY.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

The Park.

SIR GEORGE AIRY *meeting* CHARLES.

Cha. Ha! Sir George Airy a birding thus early! what forbidden game roused you so soon? for no lawful occasion could invite a person of your figure abroad, at such unfashionable hours.

Sir Geo. There are some men, Charles, whom fortune has left free from inquietudes, who are diligently studious to find out ways and means to make themselves uneasy.

Cha. Is it possible that any thing in nature can ruffle the temper of a man, whom the four seasons of the year compliment with as many thousand pounds, nay, and a father at rest with his ancestors?

Sir Geo. Why, there it is now! A man that wants money, thinks none can be unhappy that has it; but my affairs are in such a whimsical posture, that it will

require a calculation of my nativity, to find if my gold will relieve me or not.

Cha. Ha, ha, ha! never consult the stars about that; gold has a power beyond them. Then what can thy business be, that gold won't serve thee in?

Sir Geo. Why, I'm in love.

Cha. In love!——Ha, ha, ha, ha! in love!——Ha, ha, ha, ha! with what, pr'ythee? a cherubine?

Sir Geo. No, with a woman.

Cha. A woman! good. Ha, ha, ha, ha! and gold not help thee?

Sir Geo. But suppose I'm in love with two——

Cha. Ay, if thou'rt in love with two hundred, gold will fetch them, I warrant thee, boy. But who are they? who are they? come.

Sir Geo. One is a lady whose face I never saw, but witty to a miracle; the other, beautiful as Venus——

Cha. And a fool——

Sir Geo. For aught I know; for I never spoke to her; but you can inform me. I am charmed by the wit of the one, and die for the beauty of the other.

Cha. And pray which are you in quest of now?

Sir Geo. I prefer the sensual pleasure; I'm for her I've seen, who is thy father's ward, Miranda.

Cha. Nay, then I pity you; for the Jew, my father, will no more part with her, and thirty thousand pounds, than he would with a guinea to keep me from starving.

Sir Geo. Now, you see, gold can't do every thing, Charles.

Cha. Yes, for 'tis her gold that bars my father's gate against you.

Sir Geo. Why, if he be this avaricious wretch, how can'st thou by such a liberal education?

Cha. Not a souse out of his pocket, I assure you: I had an uncle who defrayed that charge; but for some little wildnesses of youth, though he made me his heir, left dad my guardian till I came to years of discretion,

which I presume the old gentleman will never think I am ; and now he has got the estate into his clutches, it does me no more good than if it lay in Prester John's dominions.

Sir Geo. What, canst thou find no stratagem to redeem it?

Cha. I have made many essays to no purpose; though want, the mistress of invention, still tempts me on, yet still the old fox is too cunning for me.—I am upon my last project, which, if it fails, then for my last refuge—a brown musket.

Sir Geo. What is't?—Can I assist thee?

Cha. Not yet; when you can, I have confidence enough in you to ask it.

Sir Geo. I am always ready. But what does he intend to do with Miranda? is she to be sold in private, or will he put her up by way of auction, at who bids most? if so, egad, I'm for him; my gold, as you say, shall be subservient to my pleasure.

Cha. To deal ingenuously with you, Sir George, I know very little of her or home; for, since my uncle's death, and my return from travel, I have never been well with my father; he thinks my expenses too great, and I his allowance too little; he never sees me, but he quarrels, and to avoid that, I shun his house as much as possible. The report is, he intends to marry her himself.

Sir Geo. Can she consent to it?

Cha. Yes, faith, so they say: but I tell you, I am wholly ignorant of the matter. I fancy she plays the mother-in-law already, and sets the old gentleman on to do mischief.

Sir Geo. Then I have your free consent to get her?

Cha. Ay, and my helping hand, if occasion be.

Sir Geo. Poh! yonder's a fool coming this way; let's avoid him.

[MARPLOT sings behind.

Cha. What, Marplot? No, no, he's my instrument;

there's a thousand conveniences in him ; he'll lend me his money, when he has any ; run of my errands, and be proud on it ; in short, he'll pimp for me, lie for me, drink for me, do any thing but fight for me, and that I trust to my own arm for.

Sir Geo. Nay, then he's to be endured ; I never knew his qualifications before.

Enter MARPLOT, with a Patch on his Face.

Mar. Dear Charles, yours—Ha ! Sir George Airy !—the man in the world I have an ambition to be known to ! [*Aside.*] Give me thy hand, dear boy.

Cha. A good assurance ! But harkye, how came your beautiful countenance clouded in the wrong place ?

Mar. I must confess, 'tis a little *mal-a-propos* ; but no matter for that. A word with you, Charles. Pr'ythee, introduce me to Sir George—he is a man of wit, and I'd give ten guineas to——

Cha. When you have them, you mean.

Mar. Ay, when I have them ; pugh, pox, you cut the thread of my discourse—I would give ten guineas. I say, to be ranked in his acquaintance. But, pr'ythee, introduce me.

Cha. Well, on condition you'll give us a true account how you came by that mourning nose, I will.

Mar. I'll do it.

Cha. Sir George, here's a gentleman has a passionate desire to kiss your hand.

Sir Geo. Oh, I honour men of the sword ! and I presume, this gentleman is lately come from the wars, by his scars.

Mar. No, really, Sir George, mine sprung from civil fury. Happening last night into the groom porter's—I had a strong inclination to go ten guineas with a sort of a, sort of a—kind of a milksop, as I

thought. A pox of the dice! he flung out, and my pockets being empty, as Charles knows they often are, he proved a surly North Briton, and broke my face for my deficiency.

Sir Geo. Ha, ha!—and did not you draw?

Mar. Draw, sir!—why, I did but lay my hand upon my sword, to make a swift retreat, and he roared out, “Now, the deel a ma sal, sir, gin ye touch yer steel, Ise whip mine through yer weam.”

Sir Geo. Ha, ha, ha!

Cha. Ha, ha, ha, ha! Safe was the word. So you walked off, I suppose?

Mar. Yes, for I avoid fighting, purely to be serviceable to my friends, you know——

Sir Geo. Your friends are much obliged to you, sir: I hope you'll rank me in that number.

Mar. Sir George, a bow from the side box, or to be seen in your chariot, binds me ever yours.

Sir Geo. Trifles; you may command them when you please.

Cha. Provided, he may command you.

Mar. Me! why, I live for no other purpose——Sir George, I have the honour to be caressed by most of the reigning toasts of the town: I'll tell them, you are the finest gentleman——

Sir Geo. No, no, pr'ythee let me alone to tell the ladies—my parts.—Can you convey a letter upon occasion, or deliver a message with an air of business, ha?

Mar. With the assurance of a page, and the gravity of a statesman.

Sir Geo. You know Miranda?

Mar. What! my sister ward? why, her guardian is mine; we are fellow sufferers. Ah, he is a covetous, cheating, sanctified curmudgeon: that Sir Francis Gripe is a dam'd old—hypocritical——

Cha. Hold, hold; I suppose, friend, you forget that he is my father?

Mar. Egad, and so I did, Charles—I ask your pardon, Charles, but it is for your sake I hate him. Well, I say the world is mistaken in him; his outside piety makes him every man's executor, and his inside cunning makes him every heir's gaoler. Egad, Charles, I'm half persuaded that thou'rt some ward too, and never of his getting—for never were two things so unlike, as you and your father: he scrapes up every thing, and thou spend'st every thing; every body is indebted to him, and thou art indebted to every body.

Sir Geo. A pleasant fellow.

Cha. The dog is diverting sometimes, or there would be no enduring his impertinence. He is pressing to be employed, and willing to execute; but some ill fate generally attends all he undertakes, and he oftener spoils an intrigue than helps it.

Mar. But, if I miscarry, 'tis none of my fault; I follow my instructions.

Cha. Yes, witness the merchant's wife.

Mar. Pish, pox! that was an accident.

Sir Geo. What was it, pr'ythee?

Mar. Nay, Charles, now don't expose your friend.

Cha. Why, you must know, I had lent a certain merchant my hunting horses, and was to have met his wife in his absence. Sending him along with my groom to make the compliment, and to deliver a letter to the lady at the same time, what does he do, but gives the husband the letter, and offers her the horses!

Mar. Why, to be sure, I did offer her the horses, and I remember you was even with me, for you denied the letter to be yours, and swore I had a design upon her, which my bones paid for.

Cha. Come, Sir George, let's walk round, if you are not engaged, for I have sent my man upon a little earnest business, and I have ordered him to bring me the answer into the Park.

Mar. Business! and I not know it! Egad, I'll watch him.

Sir Geo. I must beg your pardon, Charles, I am to meet your father.

Cha. My father!

Sir Geo. Ay, and about the oddest bargain, perhaps, you ever heard of; but I'll not impart till I know the success.

Mar. What can his business be with Sir Francis? Now would I give all the world to know it. Why the devil should not one know every man's concerns!

[*Aside.*

Cha. Prosperity to't, whate'er it be: I have private affairs too: over a bottle we'll compare notes.

Mar. Charles knows I love a glass as well as any man; I'll make one; shall it be to-night?—Add, I long to know their secrets.

[*Aside.*

Enter WHISPER.

Whisp. Sir, sir, Mrs. Patch says, Isabinda's Spanish father has quite spoiled the plot, and she can't meet you in the Park; but he infallibly will go out this afternoon, she says: but I must step again to know the hour.

Mar. What did Whisper say now? I shall go stark mad, if I'm not let into the secret.

[*Aside.*

Cha. Curst misfortune!

Mar. Curst! what's curst, Charles?

Cha. Come along with me, my heart feels pleasure at her name. Sir George, yours; we'll meet at the old place, the usual hour.

Sir Geo. Agreed. I think I see Sir Francis yonder.

[*Exit.*

Cha. Marplot, you must excuse me; I am engag'd.

[*Exit.*

Mar. Engaged! Egad, I'll engage my life I'll know what your engagement is.

[*Exit.*

MIRANDA is brought in, in a Chair.

Miran. [Coming from the Chair.] Let the chair wait.—My servant, that dogged Sir George, said he was in the Park.

Enter PATCH.

Ha! Miss Patch alone! Did you not tell me, you had contrived a way to bring Isabinda to the Park?

Patch. Oh, madam, your ladyship can't imagine what a wretched disappointment we have met with! Just as I had fetched a suit of my clothes for a disguise, comes my old master into his closet, which is right against her chamber door: this struck us into a terrible fright—at length, I put on a grave face, and asked him, if he was at leisure for his chocolate? in hopes to draw him out of his hole: but he snapped my nose off: "No, I shall be busy here these two hours." At which, my poor mistress, seeing no way of escape, ordered me to wait on your ladyship with the sad relation.

Miran. Unhappy Isabinda! was ever any thing so unaccountable as the humour of Sir Jealous Traffic.

Patch. Oh, madam, it's his living so long in Spain: he vows he'll spend half his estate, but he'll be a parliament man, on purpose to bring in a bill for women to wear veils, and other odious Spanish customs—He swears it is the height of impudence to have a woman seen barefaced even at church, and scarce believes there's a true-begotten child in the city.

Miran. Ha, ha, ha! how the old fool torments himself! Suppose he could introduce his rigid rules—does he think we could not match them in contrivance? No, no; let the tyrant man make what laws he will, if there's a woman under the government, I warrant she finds a way to break 'em. Is his mind set upon the Spaniard for his son-in-law still?

Patch. Ay, and he expects him by the next fleet, which drives his daughter to melancholy and despair. But, madam, I find you retain the same gay, cheerful spirit you had when I waited on your ladyship.—My lady is mighty good humoured too, and I have found a way to make Sir Jealous believe I am wholly in his interest, when my real design is to serve her: he makes me her gaoler, and I set her at liberty.

Miran. I knew thy prolific brain would be of singular service to her, or I had not parted with thee to her father.

Patch. But, madam, the report is, that you are going to marry your guardian.

Miran. It is necessary such a report should be, Patch.

Patch. But, is it true, madam?

Miran. That's not absolutely necessary.

Patch. I thought it was only the old strain, coaxing him still for your own, and railing at all the young fellows about town: in my mind now you are as ill plagued with your guardian, madam, as my lady is with my father.

Miran. No, I have liberty, wench; that she wants: what would she give now to be in this dishabille in the open air; nay, more, in pursuit of the young fellow she likes?—for that's my case, I assure you.

Patch. As for that, madam, she's even with you; for though she can't come abroad, we have a way to bring him home, in spite of old Argus.

Miran. Now, Patch, your opinion of my choice, for here he comes.—Ha! my guardian with him! what can be the meaning of this? I'm sure Sir Francis can't know me in this dress.—Let's observe them.

[*They withdraw.*]

Enter SIR FRANCIS GRIPE *and* SIR GEORGE AIRY.

Sir Fran. Verily, Sir George, thou wilt repent throwing away thy money so, for I tell thee sincerely, Mi-

randa, my charge, does not like a young fellow; they are all vicious, and seldom make good husbands: in sober sadness she cannot abide 'em.

Miran. [*Peeping.*] In sober sadness you are mistaken—What can this mean?

Sir Geo. Lookye, Sir Francis, whether she can or cannot, abide young fellows, is not the business: will you take the fifty guineas?

Sir Fran. In good truth, I will not—for I knew thy father, he was a hearty wary man, and I cannot consent that his son should squander away what he sav'd to no purpose.

Miran. [*Peeping.*] Now, in the name of wonder what bargain can he be driving about me for fifty guineas?

Sir Geo. Well, Sir Francis, since you are so conscientious for my father's sake, then permit me the favour gratis.

Sir Fran. No verily; if thou dost not buy thy experience, thou wilt never be wise; therefore give me a hundred, and try thy fortune.

Sir Geo. The scruples arose, I find, from the scanty sum.—Let me see—a hundred guineas— [*Takes them out of a Purse, and chinks them.*] Ha! they have a very pretty sound, and a very pleasing look—But then, Miranda—but if she should be cruel——

Miran. [*Peeping.*] As ten to one I shall——

Sir Fran. Ay, do, consider on't. He, he, he!

Sir Geo. No, I'll do't.—

Come, to the point; here's the gold; sum up the conditions.— [*SIR FRANCIS, pulling out a Paper.*

Miran. [*Peeping.*] Ay, for Heaven's sake do, for my expectation is on the rack.

Sir Fran. Well, at your peril be it.

Sir Geo. Ay, ay, go on.

Sir Fran. *Imprimis*, you are to be admitted into my house, in order to move your suit to Miranda, for the space of ten minutes, without let or molestation, provided I remain in the same room.

Sir Geo. But out of earshot.

Sir Fran. Well, well, I don't desire to hear what you say; ha, ha, ha! in consideration I am to have that purse and a hundred guineas.

Sir Geo. Take it—— [*Gives him the Purse.*]

Miran. [*Peeping.*] So, 'tis well it's no worse: I'll fit you both——

Sir Geo. And this agreement is to be performed to-day.

Sir Fran. Ay, ay; the sooner the better. Poor fool! how Miranda and I shall laugh at him!—Well, Sir George, ha, ha, ha! take the last sound of your guineas—Ha, ha, ha! [*Chinks them.—Exit.*]

Miran. [*Peeping.*] Sure he does not know I am Miranda.

Sir Geo. A very extraordinary bargain I have made, truly;—if she should be really in love with this old cuff now—Psha! that's morally impossible.—But then, what hopes have I to succeed? I never spoke to her——

Miran. [*Peeping.*] Say you so,—then I am safe.

Sir Geo. What, though my tongue never spoke, my eyes said a thousand things, and my hopes flattered me her's answered them. If I'm lucky—if not, it is but a hundred guineas thrown away——

[*MIRANDA and PATCH come forward.*]

Miran. Upon what, Sir George?

Sir Geo. Ha! my incognita—upon a woman, madam.

Miran. They are the worst things you can deal in, and damage the soonest; your very breath destroys them, and I fear you'll never see your return, Sir George, ha, ha!

Sir Geo. Werè they more brittle than china, and dropped to pieces with a touch, every atom of her I have ventured at, if she is but mistress of thy wit, balances ten times the sum.—Pr'ythee, let me see thy face.

Miran. By no means; that may spoil your opinion of my sense——

Sir Geo. Rather confirm it, madam.

Patch. So rob the lady of your gallantry, sir.

Sir Geo. No, child, a dish of chocolate in the morning, never spoils my dinner: the other lady, I design a set meal; so there's no danger.

Miran. Matrimony! ha, ha, ha! what crimes have you committed against the god of love, that he should revenge them so severely, to stamp husband on your forehead?

Sir Geo. For my folly in having so often met you here without pursuing the laws of nature, and exercising her command.—But I resolve, ere we part now, to know who you are, where you live, what kind of flesh and blood your face is; therefore, unmask, and don't put me to the trouble of doing it for you.

Miran. My face is the same flesh and blood with my hand, Sir George, which if you'll be so rude to provoke——

Sir Geo. You'll apply it to my cheek—the ladies' favours are always welcome, but I must have that cloud withdrawn. [*Taking hold of her.*] Remember you are in the Park, child; and what a terrible thing would it be to lose this pretty white hand?

Miran. And how will it sound in a chocolate house, that Sir George Airy rudely pulled off a lady's mask, when he had given her his honour that he never would, directly or indirectly, endeavour to know her till she gave him leave?

Sir Geo. But if that lady thinks fit to pursue and meet me at every turn, like some troubled spirit, shall I be blamed if I inquire into the reality? I would have nothing dissatisfied in a female shape.

Miran. What shall I do—— [*Pauses.*]

Sir Geo. Ay, pr'ythee, consider, for thou shalt find me very much at thy service.



BUSY BODY



MIRANDA. — AND FROM THAT FATAL NIGHT I
LOVED YOU. —

ACT. I.

SCENE. I.

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ENGRAVED BY S. NOBLE

1806

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Patch. Suppose, sir, the lady should be in love with you?

Sir Geo. Oh! I'll return the obligation in a moment.

Patch. And marry her?

Sir Geo. Ha, ha, ha! that's not the way to love her, child.

Miran. If he discovers me, I shall die——Which way shall I escape?——let me see—— [Pauses.

Sir Geo. Well, madam——

Miran. I have it——Sir George, 'tis fit you should allow something; if you'll excuse my face, and turn your back, (if you look upon me, I shall sink, even masked as I am,) I will confess why I have engaged you so often, who I am, and where I live.

Sir Geo. Well, to show you I'm a man of honour, I accept the conditions: let me but once know those, and the face won't be long a secret to me.

Patch. What mean you, madam?

Miran. To get off.

Sir Geo. 'Tis something indecent to turn one's back upon a lady, but you command, and I obey. [Turns his Back.] Come, madam, begin——

Miran. First, then, it was my unhappy lot to see you at Paris, [Draws back a little Way, and speaks.]—at a ball, upon a birthday; your shape and air charmed my eyes, your wit and complaisance my soul, and from that fatal night I loved you. [Drawing back.

And when you left the place, grief seiz'd me so,
Nor rest my heart, nor sleep my eyes could know,
Last I resolv'd, a hazardous point to try,
And quit the place, in search of liberty. [Exit.

Sir Geo. Excellent—I hope she's handsome—Well, now, madam, to the two other things, your name, and where you live——I am a gentleman, and this confession will not be lost upon me—Nay, pr'ythee don't weep, but go on, for I find my heart melts in thy be-

half—Speak quickly, or I shall turn about——Not yet—Poor lady! she expects I should comfort her, and to do her justice, she has said enough to encourage me. [*Turns about.*] Ha! gone!—the devil!—jilted!—Why, what a tale she has invented—of Paris, balls, and birthdays!—Egad, I'd give ten guineas to know who the gipsy is—A curse of my folly—I deserve to lose her. What woman can forgive a man that turns his back!

The bold and resolute, in love and war,
To conquer, take the right and swiftest way;
The boldest lover soonest gains the fair,
As courage makes the rudest force obey:
Take no denial, and the dames adore ye;
Closely pursue them, and they fall before ye.

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

A Room in SIR FRANCIS'S House.

Enter SIR FRANCIS GRIPE and MIRANDA.

Sir Fran. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Miran. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! Oh, I shall die with laughing—the most romantic adventure—Ha, ha, ha! What does the odious young fop mean? A hundred pieces to talk ten minutes with me! ha, ha, ha, ha!

Sir Fran. And I am to be by, too, there's the jest:—adad, if it had been in private, I should not have cared to trust the young dog.

Miran. Indeed and indeed but you might, Gardy—
Now methinks there's nobody handsomer than you:
so neat, so clean, so good-humour'd, and so loving—

Sir Fran. Pretty rogue, pretty rogue! and so thou
shalt find me, if thou dost prefer thy Gardy before
these caperers of the age: thou shalt outshine the
queen's box on an opera night; thou shalt be the
envy of the ring, (for I will carry thee to Hyde-Park)
and thy equipage shall surpass the——what d'ye call
'em ambassador's.

Miran. Nay, I am sure the discreet part of my sex
will envy me more for the inside furniture, when you
are in it, than my outside equipage.

Sir Fran. A cunning baggage i'faith thou art, and
a wise one too! and to show thee, that thou hast not
chose amiss, I'll this moment disinherit my son, and
settle my whole estate upon thee.

Miran. There's an old rogue now. [*Aside.*] No,
Gardy, I would not have your name be so black in
the world—You know my father's will runs that I am
not to possess my estate, without your consent, till I
am five-and-twenty; you shall only abate the odd
seven years, and make me mistress of my estate to-
day, and I'll make you master of my person to-mor-
row.

Sir Fran. Humph! that may not be safe—No,
Chargy, I'll settle it upon thee for pinmoney, and that
will be every bit as well thou know'st.

Miran. Unconscionable old wretch! bribe me with
my own money!—Which way shall I get out of his
hands. [*Aside.*]

Sir Fran. Well, what art thou thinking on, my girl,
ha? how to banter Sir George!

Miran. I must not pretend to banter; he knows
my tongue too well. [*Aside.*] No, Gardy, I have
thought of a way will confound him more than all I
could say, if I should talk to him seven years.

Sir Fran. How's that? oh! I'm transported, I'm ravish'd, I'm mad——

Miran. It would make you mad if you knew all. [*Aside.*] I'll not answer him a word, but be dumb to all he says.

Sir Fran. Dumb! good; ha, ha, ha! Excellent! ha, ha, ha, ha! I think I have you now, Sir George. Dumb! he'll go distracted—well, she's the wittiest rogue.—Ha, ha, dumb! I can't but laugh, ha, ha! to think how damn'd mad he'll be when he finds he has given his money away for a dumb show; ha, ha, ha!

Miran. Nay, Gardy, if he did but know my thoughts of him, it would make him ten times madder; ha, ha, ha, ha!

Sir Fran. Ay, so it would, Chargy, to hold him in such derision, to scorn to answer him, to be dumb! ha, ha, ha!

Enter CHARLES.

Sir Fran. How now, sirrah! who let you in?

Cha. My necessities, sir.

Sir Fran. Your necessities are very impertinent, and ought to have sent before they enter'd.

Cha. Sir, I knew 'twas a word would gain admittance no where.

Sir Fran. Then, sirrah, how durst you rudely thrust that upon your father, which nobody else would admit.

Cha. Sure the name of a son is a sufficient plea. I ask this lady's pardon if I have intruded.

Sir Fran. Ay, ay, ask her pardon and her blessing too, if you expect any thing from me.

Miran. I believe yours, Sir Francis, in a purse of guineas, would be more material. Your son may have business with you; I'll retire.

Sir Fran. I guess his business, but I'll despatch him;

I expect the knight every minute: you'll be in readiness?

Miran. Certainly; my expectation is more upon the wing than yours, old gentleman. [Exit.

Sir Fran. Well, sir.

Cha. Nay, it is very ill, sir; my circumstances are, I'm sure.

Sir Fran. And what's that to me, sir? your management should have made 'em better.

Cha. If you please to entrust me with the management of my estate, I shall endeavour it, sir.

Sir Fran. What, to set upon a card, and buy a lady's favour at the price of a thousand pieces, to rig out an equipage for a wench, or by your carelessness to enrich your steward, to fine for sheriff, or put up for a parliament-man?

Cha. I hope I should not spend it this way: however, I ask only for what my uncle left me; yours you may dispose of as you please, sir.

Sir Fran. That I shall, out of your reach, I assure you, sir. Adad, these young fellows think old men get estates for nothing but for them to squander away in dicing, wenching, drinking, dressing, and so forth.

Cha. I think I was born a gentleman, sir; I'm sure my uncle bred me like one.

Sir Fran. From which you would infer, sir, that gaming and drinking are requisites for a gentleman.

Cha. Monstrous! when I would ask him only for a support, he falls into these unmannerly reproaches. I must, though against my will, employ invention, and by stratagem relieve myself. [Aside.

Sir Fran. Sirrah, what is it you mutter, sirrah? ha! [Holds up his Cane.] I say you sha'n't have a groat out of my hands till I please—and may be I'll never please; and what's that to you?

Cha. Nay, to be robb'd or have one's throat cut is not much——

Sir Fran. What's that, sirrah? would you rob me or cut my throat, ye rogue?

Cha. Heaven forbid, sir!—I said no such thing.

Sir Fran. Mercy on me! what a plague it is to have a son of one-and-twenty, who wants to elbow one out of one's life to edge himself into the estate!

Enter MARPLOT.

Mar. Egad, he's here—I was afraid I had lost him: his secret could not be with his father; his wants are public there.—Guardian, your servant—O, Charles, are you there? I know by that sorrowful countenance of thine the old man's fist is as close as his strong box—But I'll help thee.

Sir Fran. So! here's another extravagant coxcomb that will spend his fortune before he comes to't, but he shall pay swinging interest, and so let the fool go on.—Well, what, does necessity bring you too, sir?

Mar. You have hit it, Guardian—I want a hundred pounds.

Sir Fran. For what?

Mar. Poh! for a hundred things; I can't for my life tell you for what.

Cha. Sir, I suppose I have received all the answer I am like to have.

Mar. Oh the devil! if he gets out before me I shall lose him again.

Sir Fran. Ay, sir, and you may be marching as soon as you please—I must see a change in your temper, ere you find one in mine.

Mar. Pray, sir, despatch me; the money, sir; I'm in mighty haste.

Sir Fran. Fool, take this and go to the cashier. I sha'n't be long plagu'd with thee. [*Gives him a Note.*]

Mar. Devil take the cashier! I shall certainly have Charles gone before I come back. [*Runs out.*]

Cha. Well, sir, I take my leave—but remember you expose an only son to all the miseries of wretched

poverty, which too often lays the plan for scenes of mischief.

Sir Fran. Stay, Charles! I have a sudden thought come into my head may prove to thy advantage.

Cha. Ha! does he relent?

Sir Fran. My Lady Wrinkle, worth forty thousand pounds, sets up for a handsome young husband; she prais'd thee t'other day; though the matchmakers can get twenty guineas for a sight of her, I can introduce thee for nothing.

Cha. My Lady Wrinkle, sir! why, she has but one eye.

Sir Fran. Then she'll see but half your extravagance, sir.

Cha. Condemn me to such a piece of deformity! a toothless, dirty, wry-neck'd, hunch-back'd, hag!

Sir Fran. Hunch-back'd! so much the better? then she has a rest for her misfortunes, for thou wilt load her swingingly. Now, I warrant, you think this is no offer of a father; forty thousand pounds is nothing with you.

Cha. Yes, sir, I think it is too much; a young beautiful woman, with half the money, would be more agreeable.—I thank you, sir; but you choose better for yourself I find.

Sir Fran. Out of my doors, you dog! you pretend to meddle with my marriage, sirrah!

Cha. Sir, I obey; but—

Sir Fran. But me no buts—begone, sir! dare to ask me for money again—refuse forty thousand pounds! Out of my doors, I say, without reply. [*Exit CHA.*

Enter MARPLOT, running.

Mar. Ha? gone! is Charles gone, Gardy?

Sir Fran. Yes, and I desire your wise worship to walk after him.

Mar. Nay, egad I shall run, I tell you that. A pox of the cashier for detaining me so long! Where the

devil shall I find him now? I shall certainly lose this secret, and I had rather by half lose my money——Where shall I find him now——D'ye know where Charles is gone, Gardy?

Sir Fran. Gone to the devil, and you may go after him.

Mar. Ay, that I will, as fast as I can. [*Going, returns.*] Have you any commands there, Gardy?

[*Exit.*

Sir Fran. What, is the fellow distracted?

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Sir George Airy inquires for you, sir.

Sir Fran. Desire Sir George to walk up.——Now for a trial of skill, that will make me happy and him a fool. Ha, ha, ha! In my mind, he looks like an ass already.

Enter SIR GEORGE.

Well, Sir George, do you hold in the same mind, or would you capitulate? ha, ha, ha! Look, here are the guineas; [*Chinks them.*] ha, ha, ha!

Sir Geo. Not if they were twice the sum, Sir Francis; therefore be brief, call in the lady, and take your post.

Sir Fran. Agreed. Miranda! [*Exit.*

Sir Geo. If she's a woman, and not seduced by witchcraft to this old rogue, I'll make his heart ache; for if she has but one grain of inclination about her, I'll vary a thousand shapes but find it.

Enter MIRANDA and SIR FRANCIS.

Sir Fran. There, Sir George, try your fortune.

[*Takes out his Watch.*

Sir Geo. So from the eastern chambers breaks the sun, dispels the clouds, and gilds the vales below.

[*Salutes her.*

Sir Fran. Hold, sir ; kissing was not in our agreement.

Sir Geo. Oh ! that's by way of prologue. Pr'ythee, old mammon, to thy post.

Sir Fra. Well, young Timon, 'tis now four exactly ; ten minutes, remember, is your utmost limit ; not a minute more. [*Retires to the Bottom of the Stage.*]

Sir Geo. Madam, whether you'll excuse or blame my love, the author of this rash proceeding, depends upon your pleasure, as also the life of your admirer ; your sparkling eyes speak a heart susceptible of love, your vivacity a soul too delicate to admit the embraces of decayed mortality.

Miran. [*Aside.*] Oh ! that I durst speak——

Sir Geo. Shake off this tyrant guardian's yoke ; assume yourself, and dash his bold aspiring hopes. The deity of his desires is avarice, a heretic in love, and ought to be banished by the queen of beauty. See, madam, a faithful servant kneels, and begs to be admitted in the number of your slaves.

[*MIRANDA gives him her Hand to raise him.*]

Sir Fran. I wish I could hear what he says now. [*Running up.*] Hold, hold, hold ! no palming ; that's contrary to articles——

Sir Geo. 'Sdeath, sir, keep your distance, or I'll write another article in your guts.

[*Lays his Hand to his Sword.*]

Sir Fran. [*Going back.*] A bloody-minded fellow.

Sir Geo. Not answer me ! perhaps she thinks my address too grave : I'll be more free—Can you be so unconscionable, madam, to let me say all these fine things to you without one single compliment in return ? View me well ; am I not a proper handsome fellow, ha ? can you prefer that old, dry, wither'd, sapless log of sixty-five, to the vigorous, gay, sprightly love of twenty-four ? With snoring only he'll awake thee, but I with ravishing delight would make thy senses dance in concert with the joyful minutes—Thus

would I steal and touch thy beauteous hand, [*Takes hold of her Hand.*] then ravish kisses thus.

[*Embraces her with Ecstasy.*

Sir Fran. [*Running up with his Watch in his Hand.*] There's five of the ten minutes gone, Sir George.

Sir Geo. More interruptions—you will have it, sir!

[*Lays his Hand to his Sword.*

✓ *Sir Fran.* [*Going back.*] No, no; you sha'n't have her neither. [*Aside.*

Sir Geo. Dumb still—sure this old dog has enjoind her silence. I'll try another way—Madam, these few minutes cost me a hundred pounds—and would you answer me, I could purchase the whole day so. However, madam, you must give me leave to make the best interpretation I can for my money, and take the indication of your silence for the secret liking of my person; therefore, madam, I will instruct you how to keep your word inviolate to Sir Francis, and yet answer me to every question: as, for example, when I ask any thing to which you would reply in the affirmative, gently nod your head—thus, [*Nods.*] and when in the negative, thus, [*Shakes his Head.*] and in the doubtful, a tender sigh, thus, [*Sighs.*]

Miran. How every action charms me!—but I'll fit him for signs, I warrant him. [*Aside.*

Sir Geo. Was it by his desire that you are dumb, madam, to all I can say? [*MIRANDA nods.*] Very well! she's tractable I find—And is it possible that you can love him? [*MIRANDA nods.*] Miraculous! Pardon the bluntness of my questions, for my time is short. May I not hope to supplant him in your esteem? [*MIRANDA sighs.*] Good! she answers me as I could wish.—You'll not consent to marry him then? [*MIRANDA sighs.*] How! doubtful in that?—Undone again—Humph! but that may proceed from his power to keep her out of her estate 'till twenty-five: I'll try that—Come, madam, I cannot think you hesitate in this affair out of any motive but your fortune—

let him keep it 'till those few years are expired ; make me happy with your person, let him enjoy your wealth. [MIRANDA holds up her Hands.] Why, what sign is that now? Nay, nay, madam, except you observe my lesson, I can't understand your meaning. ✓

Sir Fran. What a vengeance ! are they talking by signs? 'ad I may be fool'd here. What do you mean, Sir George?

Sir Geo. To cut your throat, if you dare mutter another syllable.

Sir Fran. 'Od I wish he were fairly out of my house!

Sir Geo. Pray, madam, will you answer me to the purpose? [MIRANDA shakes her Head, and points to SIR FRANCIS.] What does she mean! she won't answer me to the purpose, or is she afraid you' old cuff should understand her signs?—ay, it must be that. I perceive, madam, you are too apprehensive of the promise you have made, to follow my rules, therefore I'll suppose your mind, and answer for you. —“First for myself, madam; that I am in love with you is an infallible truth.” Now for you. [Turns on her Side.] “Indeed, sir! and may I believe it?” —“As certainly, madam, as that 'tis daylight, or that I die if you persist in silence.—Bless me with the music of your voice, and raise my spirits to their proper Heaven. Thus low let me entreat, ere I'm obliged to quit this place; grant me some token of a favourable reception to keep my hopes alive.” [Arises hastily, turns on her Side.] “Rise, sir, and since my guardian's presence will not allow me privilege of tongue, read that, and rest assured you are not indifferent to me.” [Offers her a Letter, she strikes it down.] “Ha, right woman! but no matter; I'll go on.”

Sir Fran. Ha! what's that! a letter!—Ha, ha, ha! thou art baulk'd.

Sir Geo. Ha! a letter! oh! let me kiss it with the same raptures that I would do the dear hand that

touched it. [*Opens it.*] Now for a quick fancy, and a long extempore——

Sir Fran. The time is expired, sir, and you must take your leave. There, my girl, there's the hundred pounds which thou hast won. Go, I'll be with you presently; ha, ha, ha, ha! [*Exit MIRANDA.*]

Sir Geo. 'Adsheart, madam, you won't leave me just in the nick, will you?

Sir Fran. Ha, ha, ha! she has nick'd you, Sir George, I think; ha, ha, ha! Have you any more hundred pounds to throw away upon courtship? ha, ha, ha!—Did I not tell thee thou wouldst repent thy money? Did I not say she hated young fellows? ha, ha, ha!

Sir Geo. And I'm positive she's not in love with age.

Sir Fran. Ha, ha, ha! no matter for that, ha, ha! She's not taken with your youth, nor your rhetoric to boot; ha, ha!

Sir Geo. Whate'er her reasons are for disliking of me, I am certain she can be taken with nothing about thee.

Sir Fran. Ha, ha, ha! how he swells with envy—Poor man! poor man!—ha, ha, ha! I must beg your pardon, Sir George; Miranda will be impatient to have her share of mirth. Verily, we shall laugh at thee most egregiously; ha, ha, ha!

Sir Geo. With all my heart, 'faith——I shall laugh in my turn too—for if you dare marry her, old Belzebub, you will be cuckolded most egregiously; remember that, and tremble—— [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

SIR JEALOUS TRAFFIC'S *House.*

Enter SIR JEALOUS ; ISABINDA *and* PATCH *following.*

Sir Jeal. What, in the balcony again, notwithstanding my positive commands to the contrary?—Why don't you write a bill on your forehead, to show passengers there's something to be let?—

Isab. What harm can there be in a little fresh air, sir?

Sir Jeal. Is your constitution so hot, mistress, that it wants cooling, ha? Apply the virtuous Spanish rules; banish your taste and thoughts of flesh, feed upon roots, and quench your thirst with water.

Isab. That and a close room would certainly make me die of the vapours.

Sir Jeal. No, mistress, 'tis your high-fed, lusty, rambling, rampant ladies—that are troubled with the vapours: 'tis your ratafia, persico, cinnamon, citron, and spirit of clara, cause such swimming in the brain, that carries many a guinea full tide to the doctor: but you are not to be bred this way: no galloping abroad, no receiving visits at home, for in our loose country the women are as dangerous as the men.

Patch. So I told her, sir, and that it was not decent to be seen in a balcony—but she threatened to slap my chops, and told me I was her servant, not her governess.

Sir Jeal. Did she so? but I'll make her to know that you are her duenna. Oh, that incomparable cus-

tom of Spain! Why, here's no depending upon old women in my country—for they are as wanton at eighty as a girl of eighteen, and a man may as safely trust to Asgil's translation, as to his great grandmother's not marrying again.

Isab. Or to the Spanish ladies' veils and duennas for the safeguard of their honour.

Sir Jeal. Dare to ridicule the cautious conduct of that wise nation, and I'll have you lock'd up this fortnight without a peep-hole.

Isab. If we had but the ghostly helps in England which they have in Spain, I might deceive you if you did——Let me tell you, sir, confinement sharpens the invention, as want of sight strengthens the other senses, and is often more pernicious than the recreation that innocent liberty allows.

Sir Jeal. Say you so, mistress! who the devil taught you the art of reasoning? I assure you, they must have a greater faith than I pretend to, that can think any woman innocent who requires liberty; therefore, Patch, to your charge I give her; lock her up till I come back from 'Change. I shall have some sauntering coxcomb, with nothing but a red coat and a feather, think, by leaping into her arms, to leap into my estate—but I'll prevent them; she shall be only Signior Babinetto's.

Patch. Really, sir, I wish you would employ any body else in this affair; I lead a life like a dog with obeying your commands. Come, madam, will you please to be locked up?

Isab. Ay, to enjoy more freedom than he is aware of. [*Aside.*]

[*Exit with PATCH.*]

Sir Jeal. I believe this wench is very true to my interest: I am happy I met with her, if I can but keep my daughter from being blown upon till Signior Babinetto arrives, who shall marry her as soon as he comes, and carry her to Spain as soon as he has married her. She has a pregnant wit; and I'd no more have

her an English wife than the Grand Signior's mistress.
[Exit.

Enter WHISPER.

Whisp. So, I saw Sir Jealous go out; where shall I find Mrs. Patch now?

Enter PATCH.

Patch. Oh, Mr. Whisper! my lady saw you out of the window, and order'd me to bid you fly and let your master know she's now alone.

Whisp. Hush! speak softly! I go, I go! But hark ye, Mrs. Patch, shall not you and I have a little confabulation, when my master and your lady are engag'd?

Patch. Ay, ay; farewell.

[Goes in and shuts the Door.

Re-enter Sir JEALOUS TRAFFIC, meeting WHISPER.

Sir Jeal. Sure, whilst I was talking with Mr. Tradewell, I heard my door clap. [Seeing WHISPER. Ha! a man lurking about my house! Who do you want there, sir?

Whisp. Want—want; a pox! Sir Jealous! What must I say now?

Sir Jeal. Ay, want! Have you a letter or message for any body there?—O' my conscience this is some he-baw'd—

Whisp. Letter or message, sir?

Sir Jeal. Ay, letter or message, sir?

Whisp. No, not I, sir.

Sir Jeal. Sirrah, sirrah! I'll have you set in the stocks if you don't tell your business immediately.

Whisp. Nay, sir, my business—is no great matter of business neither, and yet 'tis business of consequence too.

Sir Jeal. Sirrah, don't trifle with me.

Whisp. Trifle, sir! have you found him, sir?

Sir Jeal. Found what, you rascal?

Whisp. Why, Trifle is the very lapdog my lady lost, sir; I fancy'd I saw him run into this house. I'm glad you have him, sir;—my lady will be overjoy'd that I have found him.

Sir Jeal. Who is your lady, friend?

Whisp. My lady Lovepuppy, sir.

Sir Jeal. My lady Lovepuppy, sir! then pr'ythee carry thyself to her, for I know of no other whelp that belongs to her; and let me catch you no more puppy-hunting about my doors, lest I have you pressed into the service, sirrah.

Whisp. By no means, sir,—Your humble servant. I must watch whether he goes or no before I can tell my master. *[Exit.]*

Sir Jeal. This fellow has the officious leer of a pimp, and I half suspect a design; but I'll be upon them before they think on me, I warrant 'em. *[Exit.]*

SCENE III.

CHARLES's Lodgings.

Enter CHARLES and MARPLOT.

Cha. Honest Marplot! I thank thee for this supply. I expect my lawyer with a thousand pounds I have ordered him to take up, and then you shall be repaid.

Mar. Pho, pho! no more of that. Here comes Sir George Airy,

Enter SIR GEORGE.

cursedly out of humour at his disappointment. See how he looks! ha, ha, ha!

Sir Geo. Ah, Charles! I am so humbled in my pretensions to plot upon women, that I believe I shall never have courage enough to attempt a chamber-maid again—I'll tell thee——

Cha. Ha, ha! I'll spare you the relation by telling you—Impatient to know your business with my father, when I saw you enter I slipt back into the next room, where I overheard every syllable.

Mar. Did you, Charles? I wish I had been with you.

Sir George. That I said—but I'll be hang'd if you heard her answer——But pry'thee tell me, Charles, is she a fool?

Cha. I never suspected her for one; but Marplot can inform you better if you'll allow him a judge.

Mar. A fool! I'll justify she has more wit than all the rest of her sex put together. Why, she'll rally me till I ha'n't a word to say for myself.

Cha. A mighty proof of her wit, truly—

Mar. There must be some trick in't, Sir George: egad I'll find it out if it cost me the sum you paid for't.

Sir Geo. Do, and command me——

Mar. Enough, let me alone to trace a secret——

Enter WHISPER, and speaks aside to his Master.

The devil! he here again? damn that fellow, he never speaks out. Is this the same or a new secret? Sir George, won't you ask Charles what news Whisper brings?

Sir Geo. Not I, sir; I suppose it does not relate to me.

Mar. Lord, Lord; how little curiosity some people have! Now my chief pleasure is in knowing every body's business.

Sir Geo. I fancy, Charles, thou hast some engagement upon thy hands?

Cha. You guess right, Sir George—wish me success.

Sir Geo. Better than attended me. Adieu.—*Marplot*, if it falls in your way to bring me any intelligence from *Miranda*, you'll find me at the *Thatch'd-house* at six— [Exit.]

Mar. You do me much honour.

Cha. *Marplot*, you must excuse me——

Mar. Nay, nay; what need of any excuse amongst friends? I'll go with you.

Cha. Indeed you must not.

Mar. No; why you won't fight; then I suppose 'tis a duel, and I will go to secure you.

Cha. Well, but 'tis no duel, consequently no danger; therefore, pry'thee be answer'd.

Mar. What, is't a mistress then?—*Mum*—you know I can be silent upon occasion.

Cha. I wish you could be civil too: I tell you, you neither must nor shall go with me. Farewell. [Exit.]

Mar. Why then—I must and will follow you. [Exit.]

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

Enter CHARLES.

Cha. Well, here's the house which holds the lovely prize, quiet and serene: here no noisy footmen throng to tell the world that beauty dwells within; no ceremonious visit makes the lover wait, no rival to give my heart a pang. Who would not scale the window at midnight, without fear of the jealous father's pistol, rather than fill up the train of a coquette, where every minute he is jostled out of place! [Knocks softly.] *Mrs. Patch*, *Mrs. Patch*!

Enter PATCH.

Patch. Oh, are you come, sir? All's safe.

Cha. So, in, in then.

Enter MARPLOT.

Mar. There he goes! Who the devil lives here? except I can find out that, I am as far from knowing his business as ever. Gad I'll watch; it may be a bawdy-house, and he may have his throat cut. If there should be any mischief, I can make oath he went in. Well, Charles, in spite of your endeavours to keep me out of the secret, I may save your life, for aught I know. At that corner I'll plant myself; there I shall see whoever goes in or comes out. Gad I love discoveries. *[Exit.*

SCENE II.

A Chamber.

CHARLES, ISABINDA, and PATCH, *discovered.*

Isab. Patch, look out sharp; have a care of dad.

Patch. I warrant you.

Isab. Well, sir, if I may judge of your love by your courage, I ought to believe you sincere, for you venture into the lion's den when you come to see me.

Cha. If you'd consent whilst the furious beast is abroad, I'd free you from the reach of his paws.

Isab. That would be but to avoid one danger by running into another. Come, come, Charles, I fear if I consult my reason, confinement and plenty is better than liberty and starving. I know you would make the frolic pleasing for a little time, by saying and doing a world of tender things; but when our small substance is exhausted, and a thousand requisites for life are wanting, Love, who rarely dwells with Poverty, would also fail us.

Cha. Faith I fancy not; methinks my heart has laid up a stock will last for life; to back which I have taken a thousand pounds upon my uncle's estate; that surely will support us till one of our fathers relent.

Isab. There's no trusting to that, my friend; I doubt your father will carry his humour to the grave, and mine till he sees me settled in Spain.

Cha. And can you then cruelly resolve to stay till that cursed Don arrives, and suffer that youth, beauty, fire, and wit, to be sacrific'd to the arms of a dull Spaniard, to be immured, and forbid the sight of of any thing that's human?

Isab. No, when it comes to that extremity, and no stratagem can relieve us, thou shalt list for a soldier, and I'll carry thy knapsack after thee.

Cha. Bravely resolv'd! the world cannot be more savage than our parents, and fortune generally assists the bold, therefore, consent now: why should she put it to a future hazard? who knows when we shall have another opportunity?

Isab. Oh, you have your ladder of ropes, I suppose, and the closet window stands just where it did; and if you ha'n't forgot to write in characters, Patch will find a way for our assignations. Thus much of the Spanish contrivance my father's severity has taught me, I thank him: though I hate the nation, I admire their management in these affairs.

Enter PATCH.

Patch. O, madam! I see my master coming up the street.

Cha. O the devil! 'would I had my ladder now! I thought you had not expected him till night. Why, why, why, why, what shall I do, madam:

Isab. Oh! for Heaven's sake, don't go that way; you'll meet him full in the teeth.

Cha. 'Adsheart! can you shut me into no cupboard, nor ram me into a chest, ha?

Patch. Impossible, sir, he searches every hole in the house.

Isab. Undone for ever! if he sees you, I shall never see you more.

Patch. I have thought on it: run you to your chamber, madam; and, sir, come you along with me; I'm certain you may easily get down from the balcony.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

The Street.

Enter SIR JEALOUS, *with* MARPLOT *behind* him.

Sir Jeal. I don't know what's the matter, but I ✓
have a strong suspicion all is not right within; that fellow's sauntering about my door, and his tale of a puppy, had the face of a lie, methought. By St. Iago, if I should find a man in the house I'd make mince meat of him—

Mar. Mince meat; Ah, poor Charles! how I sweat for thee! Egad he's old—I fancy I might bully him, and make Charles have an opinion of my courage.

Sir Jeal. My own key shall let me in; I'll give them no warning. [*Feeling for his key.*]

Mar. What's that you say, sir?

[*Going up to Sir JEAL.*]

Sir Jeal. What's that to you, sir?

[*Turns quick upon him.*]

Mar. Yes, 'tis to me, sir, for the gentleman you threaten is a very honest gentleman. Look to't, for if he comes not as safe out of your house as he went in—

Sir Jeal. What, is he in, then?

Mar. Yes, sir, he is, then; and I say if he does not come out, I have half a dozen myrmidons hard by, shall beat your house about your ears.

Sir Jeal. Ah! a combination to undo me—I'll myrmidon you, ye dog you—Thieves! thieves!

[*Beats MARPLOT all the while he cries thieves.*]

Mar. Murder, Murder! I was not in your house, sir.

Enter THOMAS.

Tho. What's the matter, sir?

Sir Jeal. The matter, rascal! you have let a man into my house, but I'll flea him alive. Follow me; I'll not leave a mousehole unsearch'd. If I find him—
[*Exit.*]

Mar. A deuce of his cane! there's no trusting to age—What shall I do to relieve Charles? egad I'll raise the neighbourhood.—Murder! Murder!—
[*Charles drops down upon him from the Balcony.*]
Charles! faith I'm glad to see thee safe out with all my heart!

Cha. A pox of your bawling! how the devil came you here?

Mar. Egad it's very well for you that I was here; I have done you a piece of service: I told the old thunderbolt that the gentleman that was gone in was—

Cha. Was it you that told him, sir?

Mar. Yes, I told him.—

Cha. [*Laying hold of him.*] 'Sdeath! I could crush thee into atoms.

[*Exit CHARLES.*]

Mar. What! will you choke me for my kindness? —Will my inquiring soul never leave searching into other people's affairs till it gets squeeze'd out of my body? I dare not follow him now for my blood, he's in such a passion.—I'll to Miranda; if I can dis-

cover aught that may oblige Sir George, it may be a means to reconcile me again to Charles.

Sir Jeal. [*Within.*] Look about! search! find him out!

Mar. Oh, the devil! there's old Crabstick again.

[*Exit.*

Enter SIR JEALOUS and his Servants.

Sir Jeal. Are you sure you have search'd every where?

Serv. Yes, from the top of the house to the bottom.

Sir Jeal. Under the beds and over the beds?

Serv. Yes, and in them too, but found nobody, sir.

Sir Jeal. Why, what could this rogue mean?

Enter ISABINDA and PATCH.

Patch. Take courage, madam, I saw him safe out.

[*Aside to ISAB.*

Isab. Bless me! what's the matter, sir?

Sir Jeal. You know best—Pray where's the man that was here just now?

Isab. What man, sir? I saw none.

Patch. Nor I, by the trust you repose in me. Do you think I would let a man come within these doors when you are absent?

Sir Jeal. Ah, Patch! she may be too cunning for thy honesty: the very scout that he had set to give warning, discovered it to me—and threatened me with half a dozen myrmidons—but I think I maul'd the villain. These afflictions you draw upon me, mistress!

Isab. Pardon me, sir, 'tis your own ridiculous humour draws you into these vexations, and gives every fool pretence to banter you.

Sir Jeal. No, 'tis your idle conduct, your coquetish flirting into the balcony—Oh! with what joy shall I resign thee into the arms of Don Diego Babinetto!

Isab. And with what industry shall I avoid him.

[*Aside.*

Sir Jeal. Certainly that rogue had a message from somebody or other, but being baulk'd by my coming, popp'd that sham upon me. Come along, ye sots, let's see if we can find the dog again. Patch, lock her up, d'ye hear?

[*Exit with SERVANTS.*

Patch. Yes, sir—Ay, walk till your heels ache, you'll find nobody, I promise you.

Isab. Who could that scout be which he talks of?

Patch. Nay, I can't imagine without it was Whisper.

Isab. Well, dear Patch! let's employ all our thoughts how to escape this horrid Don Diego; my very heart sinks at his terrible name.

Patch. Fear not, madam; Don Carlo shall be the man, or I'll lose the reputation of contriving, and then what's a chambermaid good for?

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

SIR FRANCIS GRIPE's House.

Enter SIR FRANCIS and MIRANDA meeting.

Miran. Well, Gardy, how did I perform the dumb scene?

Sir Fran. To admiration—Thou dear little rogue! let me buss thee for it: nay, adad I will, Chargy, so muzzle, and tuzzle, and hug thee; I will, i'faith I will.

[*Hugging and kissing her.*

Miran. Nay, Gardy, don't be so lavish. Who would ride post when the journey lasts for life?

Sir Fran. Ah wag, ah wag! I'll buss thee again for that. Oh, I'm transported! When, when, my dear! wilt thou convince the world of the happy day? when shall we marry, ha?

Miran. There's nothing wanting but your consent, Sir Francis.

Sir Fran. My consent! what does my charmer mean?

Miran. Nay, 'tis only a whim; but I'll have every thing according to form—therefore when you sign an authentic paper drawn up by an able lawyer, that I have your leave to marry, the next day makes me yours, Gardy.

Sir Fran. Ha, ha, ha! a whim indeed! why, is it not demonstration I give my leave when I marry thee?

Miran. Not for your reputation, Gardy; the malicious world will be apt to say you trick me into marriage, and so take the merit from my choice: now I will have the act my own, to let the idle fops see how much I prefer a man loaded with years and wisdom.

Sir Fran. Humph! Pr'ythee leave out years, Chargy; I'm not so old, as thou shalt find. Adad I'm young: there's a caper for ye! [*Jumps.*]

Miran. Oh, never excuse it; Why, I like you the better for being old—but I shall suspect you don't love me if you refuse me this formality.

Sir Fran. Not love thee, Chargy! Adad I do love thee better than, than, than, better than——what shall I say? egad better than money? i'faith I do—

Miran. That's false, I'm sure. [*Aside.*] To prove it, do this then.

Sir Fran. Well, I will do it, Chargy, provided I bring a license at the same time.

Miran. Ay, and a parson too if you please. Ha, ha, ha! I can't help laughing to think how all the young coxcombs about town will be mortified when they hear of our marriage.

Sir Fran. So they will, so they will; ha, ha, ha!

Miran. Well, I fancy I shall be so happy with my Gardy—

Sir Fran. If wearing pearls and jewels, or eating gold, as the old saying is, can make thee happy, thou shalt be so, my sweetest, my lovely, my charming, my—verily I know not what to call thee.

Miran. You must know, Gardy, that I am so eager to have this business concluded, that I have employed my woman's brother, who is a lawyer in the Temple, to settle matters just to your liking; you are to give your consent to my marriage, which is to yourself, you know: but, mum, you must take no notice of that. So then I will, that is, with your leave, put my writings into his hands; then to-morrow we come slap upon them with a wedding that nobody thought on, by which you seize me and my estate, and I suppose make a bonfire of your own act and deed.

Sir Fran. Nay, but Chargy, if——

Miran. Nay, Gardy, no Ifs.—Have I refus'd three northern lords, two British peers, and half a score knights, to have you put in your Ifs?

Sir Fran. So thou hast indeed, and I will trust to thy management. 'Od I'm all of a fire.

Enter MARPLOT.

Sir Fran. How now, who sent for you, sir? What, is the hundred pound gone already?

Mar. No, sir; I don't want money now, Gardy.

Sir Fran. No, that's a miracle! but there's one thing you want I'm sure.

Mar. Aye, what's that?

Sir Fran. Manners! What, had I no servants without?

Mar. None that could do my business, Guardian, which is at present with this lady.

Miran. With me, Mr. Marplot! what is it, I beseech you?

Sir Fran. Ay, sir, what is it? any thing that relates to her may be delivered to me.

Mar. I deny that.

Miran. That's more than I do, sir.

Mar. Indeed, madam ! Why, then to proceed :—Fame says, that you and my most conscionable guardian here, designed, contrived, plotted, and agreed, to chouse a very civil, honest, honourable gentleman, out of a hundred pounds.

Miran. That I contrived it?

Mar. Ay, you—you said never a word against it—so far you are guilty.

Sir Fran. Pray tell that civil, honest, honourable gentleman, that if he has any more such sums to fool away, they shall be received like the last ; ha, ha, ha ! Choused, quotha ! But, harkye, let him know at the same time, that if he dare to report I tricked him of it, I shall recommend a lawyer to him, shall show him a trick for twice as much. D'ye hear? tell him that.

Mar. So, and this is the way you use a gentleman, and my friend !

Miran. Is the wretch thy friend ?

Mar. The wretch !—look ye, madam, don't call names, egad, I won't take it.

Miran. Why, you won't beat me, will you?—Ha, ha ! ✓

Mar. I don't know whether I will or no .

Sir Fran. Sir, I shall make a servant show you out at the window, if you are saucy.

Mar. I am your most humble servant, Guardian ; I design to go out the same way I came in. I would only ask this lady one question.—Don't you think, in your soul, that Sir George Airy is a very fine gentleman ?

Miran. He dresses well.

Sir Fran. Which is chiefly owing to his tailor and valet de chambre.

Miran. And if being a beau be a proof of his being a fine gentleman, he may be so.

Mar. He may be so ! Why, ma'am, the judicious

part of the world allow him wit, courage, gallantry, ay, and economy too, tho' I think he forfeited that character when he flung away a hundred pounds upon your dumb ladyship.

Sir Fran. Does that gall him? Ha, ha, ha!

Miran. So Sir George, remaining in deep discontent, has sent you, his trusty squire, to utter his complaint. Ha, ha, ha!

Mar. Yes, madam; and you, like a cruel hard-hearted Jew, value it no more—than I wou'd your ladyship, were I Sir George; you, you, you——

Miran. Oh, don't call names: I know you love to be employed, and I'll oblige you, and you shall carry him a message from me.

Mar. According as I like it. What is it?

Miran. Nay, a kind one you may be sure——First tell him I have chose this gentleman to have and to hold, and so forth.

[Clapping her Hand into SIR FRANCIS'S.

Mar. Much good may do you!

Sir Fran. Oh, the dear rogue! how I dote on her!

[Aside.

Miran. And advise his Impertinence to trouble me no more, for I prefer Sir Francis for a husband before all the fops in the universe.

Mar. Oh Lord, oh Lord! she's bewitched, that's certain. Here's a husband for eighteen—here's a tit-bit for a young lady—here's a shape, an air, and a grace—here's bones rattling in a leathern bag—[Turning SIR FRANCIS about.] here's buckram and canvas to scrub you to repentance.

Sir Fran. Sirrah, my cane shall teach you repentance presently.

Mar. No, faith, I have felt its twin brother from just such a wither'd hand too lately.

Miran. One thing more; advise him to keep from the garden-gate on the left hand, for if he dare to

saunter there, about the hour of eight, as he us'd to do, he shall be saluted with a pistol or a blunderbuss.

Sir Fran. Oh, monstrous! Why, Chargy, did he use to come to the garden-gate?

Miran. The gardener described just such another man, that always watch'd his coming out, and fain wou'd have brib'd him for his entrance—Tell him he shall find a warm reception if he comes this night.

Mar. Pistols and blunderbusses! Egad a warm reception indeed! I shall take care to inform him of your kindness, and advise him to keep farther off.

Miran. I hope he will understand my meaning better than to follow your advice. [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. Thou hast sign'd, seal'd, and ta'en possession of my heart for ever, Chargy, ha ha, ha! and for you, Mr. Saucebox, let me have no more of your messages, if ever you design to inherit your estate, gentleman.

Mar. Why, there 'tis now. Sure I shall be out of your clutches one day—Well, Guardian, I say no more: but if you be not as arrant a cuckold as e'er drove bargain upon the Exchange, or paid attendance to a court, I am the son of a whetstone; and so your humble servant.

Miran. Mr. Marplot, don't forget the message: ha, ha, ha, ha!

Mar. Nang, nang, nang! [*Exit.*

Sir Fran. I am so provok'd—'tis well he's gone.

Miran. Oh, mind him not, Gardy, but let's sign articles, and then——

Sir Fran. And then—Adad I believe I am metamorphos'd, my pulse beats high, and my blood boils, methinks—— [*Kissing and hugging her.*

Miran. Oh, fie, Gardy! be not so violent: consider the market lasts all the year.—Well; I'll in, and see if the lawyer be come: you'll follow? [*Exit.*

Sir Fran. Ay, to the world's end, my dear! Well, Frank, thou art a lucky fellow in thy old age, to have

such a delicate morsel, and thirty thousand pounds, in love with thee. I shall be the envy of bachelors, the glory of married men, and the wonder of the town. Some guardians would be glad to compound for part of the estate at despatching an heiress, but I engross the whole. *O! mihi præteritos referet si Jupiter annos.*
[Exit.]

SCENE V.

A Tavern.

SIR GEORGE and CHARLES discovered with Wine before them. WHISPER waiting.

Sir Geo. Nay, pr'ythee, don't be grave, Charles: misfortunes will happen. Ha, ha, ha! 'tis some comfort to have a companion in our sufferings.

Cha. I am only apprehensive for Isabinda; her father's humour is implacable; and how far his jealousy may transport him to her undoing, shocks my soul to think.

Sir Geo. But since you escaped undiscovered by him, his rage will quickly lash into a calm, never fear it.

Cha. But who knows what that unlucky dog, Marplot, told him; nor can I imagine what brought him hither: that fellow is ever doing mischief; and yet, to give him his due, he never designs it. This is some blundering adventure, wherein he thought to show his friendship, as he calls it!—a curse on him!

Sir Geo. Then you must forgive him. What said he?

Cha. Said!—nay, I had more mind to cut his throat, than to hear his excuses.

Sir Geo. Where is he?

Whisp. Sir, I saw him go into Sir Francis Gripe's, just now.

Cha. Oh! then he's upon your business, Sir George: a thousand to one, but he makes some mistake there, too.

Sir Geo. Impossible, without he huffs the lady, and makes love to Sir Francis.

Enter DRAWER.

Draw. Mr. Marplot is below, gentlemen, and desires to know if he may have leave to wait upon ye.

Cha. How civil the rogue is, when he has done a fault!

Sir Geo. Ho! desire him to walk up. Pr'ythee, Charles, throw off this chagrin, and be good company.

Cha. Nay, hang him, I'm not angry with him.

Enter MARPLOT.

Cha. Do but mark his sheepish look, Sir George.

Mar. Dear Charles! don't overwhelm a man already under insupportable affliction. I'm sure, I always intend to serve my friends, but if my malicious stars deny the happiness, is the fault mine?

Sir Geo. Never mind him, Mr. Marplot; he's eat up with spleen. But, tell me, what says Miranda?

Mar. Says!—nay, we are all undone there, too.

Cha. I told you so; nothing prospers that he undertakes.

Mar. Why, can I help her having chose your father for better for worse?

Cha. So; there's another of fortune's strokes. I suppose I shall be edged out of my estate, with twins every year, let who will get them.

Sir Geo. What! is the woman really possessed?

Mar. Yes, with the spirit of contradiction: she railed at you most prodigiously.

Sir Geo. That's no ill sign.

Mar. You'd say it was no good sign, if you knew all.

Sir Geo. Why, pr'ythee?

Mar. Harkye, Sir George, let me warn you; pursue your old haunt no more; it may be dangerous.

Sir Geo. My old haunt!—What do you mean?

Mar. Why, in short then, since you will have it,—Miranda vows, if you dare approach the garden gate, at eight o'clock, as you used, you shall be saluted with a blunderbuss, sir. These were her very words: nay, she bid me tell you so, too.

Sir Geo. Ha! the garden gate, at eight, as I used to do! There must be meaning in this.—Is there such a gate, Charles?

Cha. Yes, yes, it opens into the park:—I suppose her ladyship has made many a scamper through it.

Sir Geo. It must be an assignation then. Ha! my heart springs for joy! 'tis a propitious omen.—My dear Marplot, let me embrace thee!—thou art my friend, my better angel.

Mar. What do you mean, Sir George?

Sir Geo. No matter what I mean. Here, take a bumper to the garden gate, you dear rogue, you!

Mar. You have reason to be transported, Sir George; I have saved your life.

Sir Geo. My life! thou hast saved my soul, man. Charles, if thou dost not pledge this health, may'st thou never taste the joys of love.

Cha. Whisper, be sure you take care how you deliver this. [*Gives him the Letter.*] Bring me the answer to my lodgings.

Whisp. I warrant you, sir.

Mar. Whither does that letter go? Now, dare I not ask for my blood—That fellow knows more secrets than I do.

[*Exit WHISPER.*]

Cha. Now, I'm for you.

Sir Geo. To the garden gate, at the hour of eight, Charles:—along; huzza!

Cha. I begin to conceive you.

Mar. That's more than I do, egad—"To the garden gate, huzza!" [*Drinks.*] But, I hope, you design to keep far enough off on't, Sir George.

Sir Geo. Ay, ay, never fear that; she shall see I despise her frowns; let her use the blunderbuss against the next fool; she sha'n't reach me with the smoke, I warrant her:—ha, ha, ha!

Mar. Ah, Charles, if you could receive a disappointment, thus *en cavalier*, one should have some comfort in being beat for you.

Cha. The fool comprehends nothing.

Sir Geo. Nor would I have him. Pr'ythee, take him along with thee.

Cha. Enough.

Sir Geo. I kiss both your hands—And now for the garden gate.

It's beauty gives the assignation there,
And love too powerful grows t' admit of fear.

[*Exit.*

Cha. Come, you shall go home with me.

[*Exit* CHARLES.

Mar. Egad, Charles's asking me to go home with him, gives me a shrewd suspicion there's more in the garden gate than I comprehend. Faith, I'll give him the drop, and away to Gardy's and find it out.

[*Exit,*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

*The Outside of SIR JEALOUS TRAFFIC'S House.—
PATCH Peeping out of the Door.*

Enter WHISPER.

Whisp. Ha! Mrs. Patch, this is a lucky minute, to find you so readily;—my master dies with impatience.

Patch. My lady imagined so, and by her orders, I have been scouting this hour in search of you, to inform you, that Sir Jealous has invited some friends to supper with him to-night, which gives an opportunity to your master to make use of his ladder of ropes. The closet window shall be open, and Isabinda ready to receive him. Bid him come immediately.

Whisp. Excellent! he'll not disappoint, I warrant him.—But hold, I have a letter here which I'm to carry an answer to. I can't think what language the direction is.

Patch. Pho! 'tis no language, but a character which the lovers invented to avert discovery—It is impossible you should have an answer: away, and bid him come himself for that. Begone, we're ruined if you're seen, for he has doubled his care since the last accident.

Whisp. I go, I go.

[Exit..]

Patch. There, go thou into my pocket. [*Puts it beside, and it falls down.*] Now I'll up the back stairs, lest I meet him.—Well, a dexterous chambermaid is the ladies' best utensil, I say.

[Exit.]

Enter SIR JEALOUS, *with a Letter in his Hand.*

Sir Jeal. So, this is some comfort; this tells me, that Signior Don Diego Babinetto, is safely arrived. He shall marry my daughter the minute he comes—Ha, ha! what's here? [*Takes up the Letter PATCH dropped.*] A letter!—I don't know what to make of the superscription. I'll see what's withinside.—[*Opens it.*] Humph—'tis Hebrew, I think.—What can this mean?—There must be some trick in it. This was certainly designed for my daughter; but I don't know that she can speak any language but her mother tongue.—No matter for that, this may be one of love's hieroglyphics; and I fancy I saw Patch's tail sweep by: that wench may be a slut, and instead of guarding my honour, betray it. I'll find it out, I'm resolved—Who's there?

Enter THOMAS.

What answer did you bring from the gentlemen I sent you to invite?

Tho. That they'd all wait on you, sir, as I told you before; but I suppose you forgot, sir.

Sir Jeal. Did I so, sir? but I sha'n't forget to break your head, if any of them come, sir.

Tho. Come, sir!—why, did not you send me to desire their company, sir?

Sir Jeal. But I send you now, to desire their absence. Say, I have something extraordinary fallen out, which calls me abroad contrary to expectation, and ask their pardon;—and, d'ye hear, lay the cloth in my daughter's chamber, and bid the cook send supper thither presently.

Tho. Yes, sir.—Hey-day! what's the matter now?

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

ISABINDA'S Chamber.

ISABINDA and PATCH.

Isab. Are you sure nobody saw you speak to Whisper?

Patch. Yes, very sure, madam; but I heard Sir Jealous coming down stairs, so clapt his letter into my pocket. [*Feels for the Letter.*]

Isab. A letter! give it me quickly.

Patch. Bless me! what's become on't—I'm sure I put it—— [*Searching still.*]

Isab. Is it possible thou couldst be so careless?—Oh, I'm undone for ever, if it be lost.

Patch. I must have dropt it upon the stairs. But, why are you so much alarmed? if the worst happens, nobody can read it, madam, nor find out whom it was designed for.

Isab. If it falls into my father's hands, the very figure of a letter will produce ill consequences. Run and look for it upon the stairs this moment.

Patch. Nay, I'm sure it can be no where else——
[*As she is going out of the Door,*]

Enter THOMAS.

How now, what do you want?

Tho. My master ordered me to lay the cloth here for supper.

Isab. Ruined, past redemption—— [*Aside.*]

Patch. You mistake, sure.—What shall we do?

Isab. I thought he expected company to-night—
Oh, poor Charles! O, unfortunate Isabinda!

Tho. I thought so too, madam; but I suppose he has altered his mind. [*Lays the Cloth, and exit.*]

Isab. The letter is the cause. This heedless action has undone me. Fly and fasten the closet window; which will give Charles notice to retire.—Ha! my father!—oh, confusion!——

Enter SIR JEALOUS.

Sir Jeal. Hold, hold, Patch! whither are you going? I'll have nobody stir out of the room till after supper.

Patch. Sir, I was going to reach your easy chair.

Sir Jeal. I'll have nobody stir out of the room. I don't want my easy chair.

Isab. What will be the event of this? [*Aside.*

Sir Jeal. Harkye, daughter, do you know this hand?

Isab. As I suspected——Hand, do you call it, sir? 'Tis some schoolboy's scrawl.

Patch. Oh, invention!—thou chambermaid's best friend, assist me!

Sir Jeal. Are you sure you don't understand it?

[*PATCH feels in her Bosom, and shakes her Coats.*

Isab. Do you understand it, sir?

Sir Jeal. I wish I did.

Isab. Thank Heaven you do not. [*Aside.*] Then I know no more of it than you do, indeed, sir.

Patch. Oh Lord, O Lord! what have you done, sir? why, the paper is mine. [*Snatching it from him.*

Sir Jeal. Ha! yours, mistress?

Patch. Yes, sir, it is.

Sir Jeal. What is it? speak.

Patch. Yes, sir, it is a charm for the toothache—I have worn it these seven years; 'twas given me by an angel, for aught I know, when I was raving with the pain; for nobody knew from whence he came, nor whither he went. He charged me never to open it, lest some dire vengeance befall me, and Heaven knows what will be the event. O cruel misfortune! that I

should drop it, and you should open it.—If you had not opened it——

Sir Jeal. Pox of your charms and whims, for me ! if that be all, 'tis well enough. There, there, burn it, and I warrant you no vengeance will follow.

Patch. So all's right again, thus far. [*Aside.*

Isab. I would not lose Patch for the world—I'll take courage a little. [*Aside.*] Is this usage for your daughter, sir ? must my virtue and conduct be suspected for every trifle ? You immure me like some dire offender here, and deny me all the recreations which my sex enjoy, and the custom of the country, allow ; yet, not content with that, you make my confinement more intolerable, by your mistrusts and jealousies. Would I were dead, so I were free from this.

Sir Jeal. To-morrow rids you of this tiresome load : Don Diego Babinetto will be here, and then my care ends, and his begins.

Isab. Is he come then ?—Oh, how shall I avoid this hated marriage ? [*Aside.*

Enter SERVANTS, with Supper.

Sir Jeal. Come, will you sit down ?

Isab. I can't eat, sir.

Patch. No, I dare swear, he has given her supper enough. I wish I could get into the closet. [*Aside.*

Sir Jeal. Well, if you can't eat, then give me a song whilst I do.

Isab. I have such a cold, I can scarce speak, sir, much less sing.—How shall I prevent Charles coming in ? [*Aside.*

Sir Jeal. I hope, you have the use of your fingers, madam. Play a tune upon your piano whilst your woman sings me a song.

Patch. I'm as much out of tune as my lady, if he knew all. [*Aside.*

Isab. I shall make excellent music.

[*Sits down to play.*]

Patch. Really, sir, I am so frightened about your opening this charm, that I can't remember one song.

Sir Jeal. Pish! hang your charm! come, come, sing any thing.

Patch. Yes, I'm likely to sing, truly. [*Aside.*] Humph, humph; bless me! I can't raise my voice, my heart pants so.

[*Sings a little.*]

Sir Jeal. Why, what, does your heart pant so, that you can't play, neither? Pray what key are you in, ha?

Patch. Ah, would the key was turn'd on you, once.

[*Aside.*]

Sir Jeal. Why don't you sing, I say?

Patch. When madam has put her piano in tune, sir; humph, humph—

Isab. I cannot play, sir, whatever ails me. [*Rising.*]

Sir Jeal. Zounds! both sing, or I'll break the piano about your ears.

Isab. What will become of me?

[*Sits down and plays.*]

Sir Jeal. Come, mistress.

[*To PATCH.*]

Patch. Yes, sir. [*Sings, but horridly out of Tune.*]

Sir Jeal. Hey, hey! why, you are a-top of the house, and you are down in the cellar. What is the meaning of this? is it on purpose to cross me, ha?

Patch. Pray, madam, take it a little lower; I cannot reach that note—nor any note, I fear. [*Sings.*]

Cha. [*Opening the Closet Door.*] Music and singing!

'Tis thus the bright——

Sir Jeal. [*Rising up hastily, seeing CHARLES slip into the Closet.*] Hell and furies! a man in the closet!——

Patch. Ah! a ghost! a ghost!—He must not enter the closet!——

[*ISABINDA throws herself down before the Closet Door, as in a Swoon.*]

Sir Jeal. The devil!—I'll make a ghost of him, I warrant you. *[Strives to get by.]*

Patch. Oh, hold, sir,—have a care,—you'll tread upon my lady,—This comes of your opening the charm.—Oh, oh, oh, oh! *[Weeps aloud.]*

Sir Jeal. I'll charm you, housewife.—Come out, you rascal, do so!—Zounds! take her from the door, or I'll spurn her from it, and break your neck down stairs. *[Goes into the Closet.]*

Isab. He's gone! I heard him leap down.

[Aside, to PATCH.]

Enter SIR JEALOUS, out of the Closet.

Sir Jeal. Whoever the dog were, he has escaped out of the window, for the sash is up: but though he is got out of my reach, you are not. And first, Mrs. Pander, with your charms for the toothache, get out of my house,—go, troop: yet, hold, stay, I'll see you out of my doors myself;—but I'll secure your charge ere I go.

Isab. What do you mean, sir? was she not a creature of your own providing?

Sir Jeal. She was of the devil's providing, for aught I know.

Patch. What have I done, sir, to merit your displeasure?

Sir Jeal. I don't know which of you have done it, but you shall both suffer for it, till I can discover whose guilt it is. Go, get in there; I'll move you from this side of the house. *[Pushes ISABINDA in at the Door, and locks it, puts the Key in his Pocket.]* I'll keep the key myself.—I'll try what ghost will get into that room: and now, forsooth, I'll wait on you down stairs.

Patch. Ah, my poor lady!—Down stairs, sir!—but I won't go out, sir, till I have locked up my clothes.

Sir Jeal. If thou wert as naked as thou wert born,

thou shouldst not stay to put on a smock. Come along, I say. When your mistress is married, you shall have your rags, and every thing that belongs to you; but till then—

Patch. Oh, barbarous usage, for nothing!

Sir Jeal. There, go, and come no more within sight of my habitation these three days, I charge you.

[*Slaps the Door after her.—Exit.*]

Patch. Did ever anybody see such an old monster!

Enter CHARLES.

Oh, Mr. Charles! your affairs and mine are in an ill posture.

Cha. I am inured to the frowns of fortune; but what has befall'n thee?

Patch. Sir Jealous, whose suspicious nature is always on the watch; nay, even when one eye sleeps, the other keeps centinel; upon sight of you, flew into such a violent passion, that I could find no stratagem to appease him, but, in spite of all arguments, he locked his daughter into his own apartment, and turned me out of doors.

Cha. Ha! oh, Isabinda!

Patch. And swears, she shall see neither sun nor moon, till she is Don Diego Babinetto's wife, who arrived last night, and is expected with impatience.

Cha. He dies;—yes, by all the wrongs of love, he shall. Here will I plant myself, and through my breast he shall make his passage, if he enters.

Patch. A most heroic resolution! there might be ways found out more to your advantage: policy is often preferred to open force.

Cha. I apprehend you not.

Patch. What think you of personating this Spaniard, imposing upon the father, and marrying your mistress by his own consent?

Cha. Say'st thou so, my angel!—Oh, could that be done, my life to come, would be too short to recom-

pense thee :—but how can I do that, when I neither know what ship he came in, nor from what part of Spain, who recommends him, or how attended.

Patch. I can solve all this. He is from Madrid ; his father's name Don Pedro Questo Portento Babinetto. I've a letter of his to Sir Jealous, which he dropt one day. You understand Spanish, and the hand may be counterfeited. You conceive me, sir.

Cha. My better genius ! thou hast revived my drooping soul. I'll about it instantly. Come to my lodgings, and we'll concert matters. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A Garden Gate, open ; SCENTWELL waiting within.

Enter SIR GEORGE AIRY.

Sir Geo. So, this is the gate, and most invitingly open. If there should be a blunderbuss here now, what a dreadful ditty would my fall make for fools, and what a jest for the wits ; how my name would be roared about the streets !—Well, I'll venture all.—

Scent. [*Within.*] Hist, hist ! Sir George Airy——

Sir Geo. A female voice !—thus far I'm safe.—My dear——

Enter SCENTWELL.

Scent. No, I'm not your dear, but I'll conduct you to her. Give me your hand ; you must go through many a dark passage, and dirty step, before you arrive——

Sir Geo. I know I must, before I arrive at Paradise ; therefore, be quick, my charming guide.

Scent. For aught you know. Come, come, your hand, and away.

Sir Geo. Here, here, child ;—you can't be half so swift as my desires. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

*The House.**Enter MIRANDA.*

Miran. Well, let me reason a little with my mad self. Now, don't I transgress all rules to venture upon a man, without the advice of the grave and wise ! But then, a rigid, knavish guardian, who would have married me—to whom? even to his nauseous self, or nobody. Sir George is what I have tried in conversation, inquired into his character, and am satisfied in both. Then, his love! who would have given a hundred pounds, only to have seen a woman he had not infinitely lov'd? So, I find my liking him, has furnished me with arguments enough of his side; and now, the only doubt remains whether he will come or no.

Enter SCENTWELL and SIR GEORGE.

Scent. That's resolved, madam, for here's the knight.

[*Exit SCENTWELL.*]

Sir Geo. And do I once more behold that lovely object, whose idea fills my mind, and forms my pleasing dreams !

Miran. What, beginning again in heroics !—Sir George, don't you remember how little fruit your last prodigal oration produced? Not one bare single word in answer.

Sir Geo. Ha! the voice of my incognita !—Why did you take ten thousand ways to captivate a heart, your eyes alone had vanquished?

Miran. Do you think we can agree on that same terrible bugbear matrimony, without heartily repenting on both sides?

Sir Geo. It has been my wish since first my longing

eyes beheld you.—Haste then, and let us tie the knot, and prove the envy'd pair——

Miran. Hold, not so fast! I have provided better than to venture on dangerous experiments headlong——My Guardian, trusting to my dissembled love, has given up my fortune to my own disposal, but with this proviso, that he to-morrow morning weds me. He is now gone to Doctors' Commons for a license.

Sir Geo. Ha! a licence!

Miran. But I have planted emissaries that infallibly take him down to Epsom, under a pretence that a brother usurer of his is to make him his executor, the thing on earth he covets.

Sir Geo. 'Tis his known character.

Miran. Now, my instruments confirm him this man is dying, and he sends me word he goes this minute. It must be to-morrow ere he can be undeceived: that time is ours.

Sir Geo. Let us improve it then, and settle on our coming years endless, endless happiness.

Miran. I dare not stir till I hear he's on the road——then I and my writings, the most material point, are soon removed.

Sir Geo. I have one favour to ask: If it lies in your power you would be a friend to poor Charles?

Miran. I never was his enemy, and only put it on as it help'd my designs on his father. If his uncle's estate ought to be in his possession, which I shrewdly suspect, I may do him a singular piece of service.

Sir Geo. You are all goodness.

Enter SCENTWELL.

Scent. Oh, madam! my master and Mr. Marplot are just coming into the house.

Miran. Undone, undone! if he finds you here in this crisis, all my plots are unravell'd.

Sir Geo. What shall I do? can't I get back into the garden?

Scent. Oh no! he comes up those stairs.

Miran. Here, here, here! can you condescend to stand behind this chimneyboard, Sir George?

Sir Geo. Any where, any where, dear madam! without ceremony.

Scent. Come, come, sir, lie close——

[*They put him behind the Chimneyboard.*]

Enter SIR FRANCIS and MARPLOT; SIR FRANCIS peeling an Orange.

Sir Fran. I cou'd not go, though 'tis upon life and death, without taking leave of dear Chargy. Besides, this fellow buzz'd into my ears that thou might'st be so desperate as to shoot that wild rake which haunts the garden gate, and that would bring us into trouble, dear——

Miran. So, Marplot brought you back then?

Mar. Yes, I brought him back.

Miran. I'm oblig'd to him for that, I'm sure.

[*Frowning at MARPLOT aside.*]

Mar. By her looks she means she's not oblig'd to me. I have done some mischief now, but what I can't imagine.

Sir Fran. Well, Chargy, I have had three messengers to come to Epsom to my neighbour Squeezum's, who, for all his vast riches, is departing. [*Sighs.*]

Mar. Ay, see what all you usurers must come to.

Sir Fran. Peace, you young knave! Some forty years hence I may think on't—But, chargy, Ill be with thee to-morrow before those pretty eyes are open; I will, I will, Chargy; I'll rouse you, i'faith—Here, Mrs. Scentwell, lift up your lady's chimneyboard, that I may throw my peel in, and not litter her chamber.

Miran. Oh, my stars! what will become of us now?

Scent. Oh, pray, sir, give it me; I love it above all things in nature; indeed I do.

Sir Fran. No, no, hussey; you have the green pip already; I'll have no apothecary's bills.

[*Goes towards the Chimney.*]

Miran. Hold, hold, hold, dear Gardy! I have a, a, a, a, a, monkey shut up there, and if you open it before the man comes that is to tame it, 'tis so wild, 'twill break all my china, or get away, and that would break my heart; for I'm fond on't to distraction, next thee, dear Gardy! [In a flattering Tone.]

Sir Fran. Well, well, Chargy, I won't open it; she shall have her monkey, poor rogue! Here, throw this peel out of the window. [Exit SCENTWELL.]

Mar. A monkey! dear madam, let me see it; I can tame a monkey as well as the best of them all. Oh, how I love the little miniatures of man!

Miran. Be quiet, mischief! and stand farther from the chimney——You shall not see my monkey——why, sure— [Striving with him.]

Mar. For Heaven's sake, dear madam! let me but peep, to see if it be as pretty as Lady Fiddle Faddle's. Has it got a chain?

Miran. Not yet, but I design it one shall last its lifetime. Nay, you shall not see it.——Look, Gardy, how he teazes me!

Sir Fran. [Getting between him and the Chimney.] Sirrah, sirrah, let my Chargy's monkey alone, or bamboo shall fly about your ears. What! is there no dealing with you!

Mar. Pugh, pox of the monkey! here's a rout! I wish he may rival you.

Enter WILLIAM.

Will. Sir, the coach is ready at the door.

Sir Fran. Well, I am going to be executor; better for thee, jewel. B'ye, Chargy; one buss!—I'm glad thou hast got a monkey to divert thee a little.

Miran. Thank'e, dear Gardy?—Nay, I'll see you to the coach.

Sir Fran. That's kind, adad.

Miran. Come along, Impertinence. [To MAR.

[*Exeunt* SIR FRANCIS and MIRANDA.

Mar. [Stepping back.] Egad, I will see the monkey now. [Lifts up the Board, and discovers SIR GEORGE.] O Lord! O Lord! Thieves! thieves! murder!

Sir Geo. Damn ye, you unlucky dog! 'tis I. Which way shall I get out? Show me instantly, or I'll cut your throat.

Mar. Undone, undone! At that door there. But hold, hold; break that china, and—I'll bring you off.

[He runs off at the Corner, and throws down some China.

Re-enter SIR FRANCIS, MIRANDA, and SCENTWELL.

Sir Fran. Mercy on me! what's the matter?

Miran. O, you toad! what have you done?

Mar. No great harm; I beg of you to forgive me. Longing to see the monkey, I did but just raise up the board, and it flew over my shoulders, scratch'd all my face, broke yon' china, and whisked out of the window.

Sir Fran. Where where is it, sirrah?

Mar. There, there, Sir Francis, upon your neighbour Parmazan's pantiles.

Sir Fran. Was ever such an unlucky rogue! Sirrah, I forbid you my house. Call the servants to get the monkey again. Pug, Pug, Pug! I would stay myself to look it, but that you know my earnest business.

Miran. Go, go, dear Gardy! I hope I shall recover it.

Sir Fran. B'ye, b'ye, dearee! Ah, Mischief! how you look now! B'ye, b'ye. [Exit.

Miran. Scentwell, see him in the coach, and bring me word.

Scent. Yes, madam.

[*Exit.*

Miran. So, sir, you have done your friend a signal piece of service, I suppose.

Mar. Why, look you, madam, if I have committed a fault, thank yourself; no man is more serviceable when I am let into a secret, and none more unlucky at finding it out. Who cou'd divine your meaning? when you talked of a blunderbuss, who thought of a rendezvous? and when you talked of a monkey, who the devil dreamt of Sir George?

Miran. A sign you converse but little with our sex, when you can't reconcile contradictions.

Enter SCENTWELL.

Scent. He's gone, madam, as fast as the coach and six can carry him.

Enter SIR GEORGE.

Sir Geo. Then I may appear.

Mar. Here's Pug, ma'am—Dear Sir George! make my peace. On my soul, I never took you for a monkey before.

Sir Geo. I dare swear thou didst not. Madam, I beg you to forgive him.

Miran. Well, Sir George, if he can be secret.

Mar. 'Odsheart, madam! I'm as secret as a priest, when trusted.

Sir Geo. Why, 'tis with a priest our business is at present.

Scent. Madam, here's Mrs. Isabinda's woman to wait on you.

Miran. Bring her up.

Mar. Bring her up. Let us hear what she wants.

Enter PATCH.

Miran. How do you, Mrs. Patch! What news from your lady?

Patch. That's for your private ear, madam. Sir

George, there's a friend of yours has an urgent occasion for your assistance.

Sir Geo. His name?

Mar. His name?

Patch. Charles.

Mar. Ha! I'll wait on you, Sir George.

Sir Geo. A third person may not be proper, perhaps. As soon as I have despatched my own affairs, I am at his service. I'll send my servant to tell him I'll wait on him in half an hour.

Miran. How came you employed in this message, Mrs. Patch?

Mar. Ay, how were you employed?

Patch. Want of business, madam; I am discharged by my master, but hope to serve my lady still.

Miran. How! discharg'd! you must tell me the whole story within.

Patch. With all my heart, madam.

Mar. Tell it here, Mrs. Patch. Pish, Pox! I wish I were fairly out of the house. I find marriage is the end of this secret; and now I am half mad to know what Charles wants him for. [*Aside.*]

Sir Geo. Madam, I'm doubly press'd by love and friendship. This exigence admits of no delay. Shall we make Marplot of the party?

Miran. If you'll run the hazard, Sir George; I believe he means well.

Mar. Nay, nay; for my part, I desire to be let into nothing; I'll be gone; therefore, pray, don't mistrust me. [*Going.*]

Sir Geo. So, now he has a mind to be gone to Charles. Nô, Mr. Marplot, you must not leave us; we want a third person. [*Takes hold of him.*]

Mar. I never had more mind to be gone in my life.

Miran. Come along then; if we fail in the voyage, thank yourself for taking this ill-starr'd gentleman on board.

Sir Geo. That vessel ne'er can unsuccessful prove,
Whose freight is beauty, and whose pilot's love.

[*Exeunt* SIR GEORGE and MIRANDA.]

Mar. Tyty ti, tyty ti. [*Steals off the other Way.*]

Re-enter SIR GEORGE.

Sir Geo. Marplot! Marplot!

Mar. [*Entering.*] Here! I was coming, Sir George.
Lord, can't you let one tie up one's garter? [*Exeunt.*]

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

The House.

Enter MIRANDA, PATCH, and SCENTWELL.

Miran. Well, Patch, I have done a strange bold thing; my fate is determin'd, and expectation is no more. Now, to avoid the impertinence and roguery of an old man, I have thrown myself into the extravagance of a young one; if he should despise, slight, or use me ill, there's no remedy from a husband but the grave, and that's a terrible sanctuary.

Patch. O! fear not, madam; you'll find your account in Sir George Airy.

Miran. I long till I am out of this house, lest any accident should bring my guardian back. Scentwell, put my best jewels into the little casket, slip them into thy pocket, and let us march off to Sir Jealous's.

Scent. It shall be done, madam. [*Exit* SCENT.]

Patch. Sir George will be impatient, madam. If their plot succeeds, we shall be well received; if not,

he will be able to protect us. Besides, I long to know how my young lady fares.

Miran. Farewell, old Mammon, and thy detested walls! 'Twill be no more sweet Sir Francis! I shall be compell'd the odious task of dissembling no longer to get my own, and coax him with the wheedling names of my precious, my dear, dear Gardy! O Heav'ns!

Enter SIR FRANCIS behind.

Sir Fran. Ah, my sweet Chargy! don't be frightened: [*She starts.*] but thy poor Gardy has been abus'd, cheated, fool'd, betray'd; but nobody knows by whom.

Miran. Undone, past redemption! [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. What, won't you speak to me, Chargy?

Miran. I am so surprised with joy to see you, I know not what to say.

Sir Fran. Poor dear girl! But do you know that my son, or some such rogue, to rob or murder me, or both, contrived this journey? for upon the road I met my neighbour Squeezum well, and coming to town.

Miran. Good lack! good lack! what tricks are there in this world?

Enter SCENTWELL, with a Diamond Necklace in her Hand, not seeing SIR FRANCIS.

Scent. Madam, be pleas'd to tie this necklace on, for I can't get it into the— [*Seeing SIR FRANCIS.*

Miran. The wench is a fool, I think! could you not have carried it to be mended without putting it in the box?

Sir Fran. What's the matter?

Miran. Only, dearee! I bid her, I bid her—Your ill usage has put every thing out of my head. But won't you go, Gardy, and find out these fellows, and have them punished? and, and—

Sir Fran. Where should I look for them, child? No, I'll sit me down contented with my safety, nor stir out of my own doors till I go with thee to a parson.

Miran. [*Aside.*] If he goes into his closet, I am ruin'd. Oh, bless me, in this fright I had forgot Mrs. Patch.

Patch. Ay, madam, and I stay for your speedy answer.

Miran. [*Aside.*] I must get him out of the house. Now assist me, Fortune!

Sir Fran. Mrs. Patch! I profess I did not see you: how dost thou do, Mrs. Patch? Well, don't you repent leaving my Chargy?

Patch. Yes, every body must love her—but I come now——Madam, what did I come for? my invention is at the last ebb. [*Aside to MIRANDA.*]

Sir Fran. Nay, never whisper, tell me.

Miran. She came, dear Gardy! to invite me to her lady's wedding, and you shall go with me, Gardy; 'tis to be done this moment, to a Spanish merchant. Old Sir Jealous keeps on his humour; the first minute he sees her, the next he marries her.

Sir Fran. Ha, ha, ha, ha! I'd go, if I thought the sight of matrimony would tempt Chargy to perform her promise. There was a smile, there was a consenting look, with those pretty twinklers, worth a million! 'Ods-precious! I am happier than the Great Mogul, the Emperor of China, or all the potentates that are not in wars. Speak, confirm it, make me leap out of my skin.

Miran. When one has resolved, 'tis in vain to stand shilly-shally. If ever I marry, positively this is my wedding day.

Sir Fran. O happy, happy man!—Verily, I will beget a son the first night shall disinherit that dog Charles. I have estate enough to purchase a barony,

and be the immortalizing the whole family of the Gripes.

Miran. Come then, Gardy, give me thy hand ; let's to this house of Hymen.

My choice is fix'd, let good or ill betide.

Sir Fran. The joyful bridegroom I,

Miran. And I the bride. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

SIR JEALOUS TRAFFIC's House.

Enter SIR JEALOUS, *meeting* THOMAS.

Tho. Sir, here's a couple of gentlemen inquire for you ; one of them calls himself Signior Diego Babinetto.

Sir Jeal. Ha ! Signior Babinetto ! admit 'em instantly—joyful minute ; I'll have my daughter married to-night.

Enter CHARLES *in a Spanish Habit*, with SIR GEORGE *dressed like a Merchant.*

Sir Jeal. Senhor, beso las manos : vuestra merced es muy bien venido en esta tierra.

Cha. Senhor, soy muy humilde, y muy obligado cryado de vuestra merced : mi padre embia a vuestra merced, los mas profundos de sus respetos ; y a comissionado este mercadel Ingles, de concluir un negocio, que me haze el mas dichoss hombre del mundo, haziendo me su yerno.

Sir Jeal. I am glad on't, for I find I have lost much of my Spanish. Sir, I am your most humble servant. Signior Don Diego Babinetto has informed me that you are commissioned by Signior Don Pedro, &c. his worthy father——

Sir Geo. To see an affair of marriage consummated between a daughter of yours, and Signior Diego Babinetto, his son here. True, sir, such a trust is reposed in me, as that letter will inform you. I hope 'twill pass upon him. [*Aside.*] [*Gives him a Letter.*

Sir Jeal. Ay, 'tis his hand. [*Seems to read.*

Sir Geo. Good, you have counterfeited to a nicety, Charles. [*Aside to CHARLES.*

Cha. If the whole plot succeeds as well I'm happy.

Sir Jeal. Sir, I find by this that you are a man of honour and probity; I think, sir, he calls you Meanwell.

Sir Geo. Meanwell is my name, sir.

Sir Jeal. A very good name, and very significant; for to mean well is to be honest, and to be honest is the virtue of a friend, and a friend is the delight and support of human society.

Sir Geo. You shall find that I'll discharge the part of a friend in what I have undertaken, Sir Jealous. Therefore, sir, I must entreat the presence of your fair daughter, and the assistance of your chaplain; for Signior Don Pedro strictly enjoined me to see the marriage rites performed as soon as we should arrive, to avoid the accidental overtures of Venus.

Sir Jeal. Overtures of Venus!

Sir Geo. Ay, sir; that is, those little hawking females that traverse the Park and the Playhouse to put off their damaged ware—they fasten upon foreigners like leeches, and watch their arrival as carefully as the Kentish men do a shipwreck: I warrant you they have heard of him already.

Sir Jeal. Nay, I know this town swarms with them.

Sir Geo. Ay, and then you know the Spaniards are naturally amorous, but very constant; the first face fixes 'em; and it may be very dangerous to let him ramble ere he is tied.

Sir Jeal. Pat to my purpose—Well, sir, there is

but one thing more, and they shall be married instantly. Don Pedro writ me word, in his last but one, that he designed the sum of five thousand crowns by way of jointure for my daughter, and that it should be paid into my hand upon the day of marriage—

Cha. O the devil! [*Aside.*

Sir Jeal. In order to lodge it in some of our funds, in case she should become a widow, and return for England——

Sir Geo. Pox on't! this is an unlucky turn. What shall I say? [*Aside.*

Sir Jeal. And he does not mention one word of it in this letter.

Sir Geo. Humph! True, Sir Jealous, he told me such a thing, but, but, but, but—he, he, he, he—he did not imagine that you would insist upon the very day; for, for, for, for money, you know, is dangerous returning by sea, an, an, an, an—

Cha. Zounds! say we have brought it in commodities. [*Aside to SIR GEORGE.*

Sir Geo. And so, sir, he has sent it in merchandize; tobacco, sugars, spices, lemons, and so forth, which shall be turned into money with all expedition: in the mean time, sir, if you please to accept of my bond for performance——

Sir Jeal. It is enough, sir; I am so pleased with the countenance of Signior Diego, and the harmony of your name, that I'll take your word, and will fetch my daughter this moment. Within there!

Enter SERVANT.

Desire Mr. Tackum, my neighbour's chaplain, to walk hither.

Serv. Yes, sir. [*Exit.*

Sir Jeal. Gentlemen, I'll return in an instant. [*Exit.*

Cha. Wond'rous well! let me embrace thee.

Sir Geo. Egad, that five thousand crowns had like to have ruined the plot.

Cha. But that's over; and if Fortune throws no more rubs in our way——

Sir Geo. Thou'lt carry the prize——But hist! here he comes.

Enter SIR JEALOUS, dragging in ISABINDA.

Sir Jeal. Come along, you stubborn baggage you! come along.

Isab. Oh! hear me, sir, hear me but speak one word; Do not destroy my everlasting peace; My soul abhors this Spaniard you have chose.

Sir Jeal. How's that!

Isab. Let this posture move your tender nature.

[*Kneels.*

For ever will I hang upon these knees,
Nor loose my hands till you cut off my hold,
If you refuse to hear me, sir.

Sir Jeal. Off, I say. Mr. Meanwell, pray help me a little.

Sir Geo. Rise, madam, and do not disoblige your father, who has provided a husband worthy of you, one that will love you equal with his soul, and one that you will love, when once you know him.

Isab. Oh! never, never!

Could I suspect that falsehood in my heart,
I would this moment tear it from my breast,
And straight present him with the treach'rous part.

Sir Jeal. Falsehood! Why, who the devil are you in love with? Don't provoke me; for, by St. Iago, I shall beat you, housewife.

Cha. Heaven forbid! for I shall infallibly discover myself if he should.

Sir Geo. Have patience, madam, and look at him; why will ye prepossess yourself against a man that is master of all the charms you would desire in a husband.

Sir Jeal. Ay, look at him, Isabinda. Is there a properer, handsomer, better shaped fellow in England,

ye jade you? Ha! see, see the obstinate baggage shuts her eyes; by St. Iago, I have a good mind to beat 'em out. *[Pushes her down.]*

Isab. Do then, sir, kill me, kill me instantly;
'Tis much the kinder action of the two,
For 'twill be worse than death to wed him.

Sir Geo. Sir Jealous, you are too passionate. Give me leave, I'll try by gentle words to work her to your purpose.

Sir Jeal. I pray do, Mr. Meanwell, I pray do; she'll break my heart. *[Weeps.]* There is in that box jewels of the value of three thousand pounds, which were her mother's, and a paper wherein I have settled one half of my estate upon her now, and the whole when I die, but provided she marries this gentleman, else, by St. Iago, I'll turn her out of doors to beg or starve. Tell her this, Mr. Meanwell, pray do.

[Walks aside.]

Sir Geo. Come, madam, do not blindly cast your life away, just in the moment you would wish to save it.

Isab. Pray cease your trouble, sir; I have no wish but sudden death to free me from this hated Spaniard. If you are his friend, inform him what I say; my heart is given to another youth, whom I love with the same strength of passion that I hate this Diego, with whom, if I am forced to wed, my own hand shall cut the Gordian knot.

Sir Geo. Suppose this Spaniard, which you strive to shun, should be the very man to whom you'd fly?

Isab. Ha!

Sir Geo. Would you not blame your rash resolve, and curse your eyes that would not look on Charles?

Isab. On Charles! Where is he? O, let me fly into his arms! *[Rises.]*

Sir Geo. Hold, hold, hold. 'Sdeath! madam, you'll ruin all. Your father believes him to be Signior Babinetto. Compose yourself a little, pray madam. *[He runs to SIR JEALOUS.]* She begins to hear reason,

sir; the fear of being turned out of doors has done it.

[*Runs back to ISABINDA.*

Sir Jeal. Well, Isabinda, can you refuse to bless a father, whose only care is to make you happy, as Mr. Meanwell has informed you? Come, wipe thy eyes; nay, pr'ythee do, or thou wilt break thy father's heart. See, thou bring'st the tears in mine, to think of thy undutiful carriage to me. [*Weeps.*

Isab. Oh, do not weep, sir; your tears are like a poignard to my soul. Do with me what you please; I am all obedience.

Sir Jeal. Ha! then thou art my child again.

Sir Geo. 'Tis done; and now, friend, the day's thy own.

Sir Jeal. And wilt thou love him?

Isab. I will endeavour it, sir.

Enter THOMAS.

Tho. Sir, here is Mr. Tackum.

Sir Jeal. Show him into the parlour. Now, Mr. Meanwell, let's to the parson,

Who, by his art, will join this pair for life,
Make me the happiest father, her the happiest wife.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

The Street before SIR JEALOUS's Door.

Enter MARPLOT,

Mar. I have hunted all over the town for Charles, but can't find him, and by Whisper's scouting at the end of the street, I suspect he must be in the house again. I am informed, too, that he has borrowed a Spanish habit out of the playhouse: what can it mean?

Enter THOMAS.

Hark'e, sir, do you belong to this house?

Tho. Yes, sir.

Mar. Isn't your name Richard?

Tho. No, sir, Thomas.

Mar. Oh, ay, Thomas—Well, Thomas, there's a shilling for you.

Tho. Thank you, sir.

Mar. Pray, Thomas, can you tell if there be a gentleman in it in a Spanish habit?

Tho. There's a Spanish gentleman within, that is just a-going to marry my young lady, sir.

Mar. Are you sure he is a Spanish gentleman?

Tho. I'm sure he speaks no English, that I hear of.

Tho. Then that can't be him I want, for 'tis an English gentleman that I inquire after; he may be dressed like a Spaniard for ought I know.

Tho. Ha! who knows but this may be an impostor? I'll inform my master, for if he should be imposed upon, he'll beat us all round. [*Aside.*] Pray come in, sir, and see if this be the person you inquire for.

Mar. Ay, I'll follow you—Now for it. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

Inside of the House.

Enter MARPLOT and THOMAS.

Tho. Sir, please to stay here, I'll send my master to you. [*Exit.*]

Mar. So, this was a good contrivance. If this be Charles now, he will wonder how I found him out.

Enter THOMAS and SIR JEALOUS.

Sir Jeal. What is your earnest business, block-

head! that you must speak with me before the ceremony's past? Ha! who's this?

Tho. Why, this gentleman, sir, wants another gentleman in a Spanish habit, he says.

Sir Jeal. In a Spanish habit! 'tis some friend of Signior Don Diego's, I warrant. Sir, your servant.

Mar. Your servant, sir.

Sir Jeal. I suppose you would speak with Signior Babinetto?

Mar. Sir!

Sir Jeal. I say, I suppose you would speak with Signior Babinetto?

Mar. Hey day! what the devil does he say now?—Sir, I don't understand you.

Sir Jeal. Don't you understand Spanish, sir?

Mar. Not I, indeed, sir.

Sir Jeal. I thought you had known Signior Babinetto?

Mar. Not I, upon my word, sir.

Sir Jeal. What then, you'd speak with his friend, the English merchant, Mr. Meanwell?

Mar. Neither, sir, not I; I don't mean any such thing.

Sir Jeal. Why, who are you then, sir? and what do you want? *[In an angry Tone.]*

Mar. Nay, nothing at all, not I, sir.—Pox on him! I wish I were out; he begins to exalt his voice;—I shall be beaten again. *[Aside.]*

Sir Jeal. Nothing at all, sir! Why then, what business have you in my house? ha!

Tho. You said you wanted a gentleman in a Spanish habit.

Mar. Why, ay, but his name is neither Babinetto, nor Meanwell.

Sir Jeal. What is his name then, sirrah?—Ha! now I look at you again, I believe you are the rogue that threatened me with half a dozen myrmidons—Speak, sir, who is it you look for? or, or——

Mar. A terrible old dog!—Why, sir, only an honest young fellow of my acquaintance.—I thought that here might be a ball, and that he might have been here in a masquerade. 'Tis Charles, Sir Francis Gripe's son,—because I know he used to come hither sometimes.

Sir Jeal. Did he so?—not that I know (of, I'm sure.—Pray Heaven, that this be Don Diego——If I should be tricked now—Ha! my heart misgives me plaguily——Within there! stop the marriage——Run, sirrah, call all my servants! I'll be satisfied, that this is Signior Pedro's son, ere he has my daughter.

Mar. Ha! Sir George! What have I done now?

Enter SIR GEORGE, with a drawn Sword.

Sir Geo. Ha! Marplot here—oh, the unlucky dog! What's the matter, Sir Jealous?

Enter SERVANTS.

Sir Jeal. Nay, I don't know the matter, Mr. Meanwell.

Mar. Upon my soul, Sir George—it——

[*Going up to SIR GEORGE.*

Sir Jeal. It's Sir George, is it? Nay, then I'm betray'd, ruin'd, undone.—Thieves, traitors, rogues!—[*Offers to go in.*] Stop the marriage, I say——

Sir Geo. I say, go on, Mr. Tackum.—Nay, no entering here; I guard this passage, old gentleman:—the act and deed were both your own, and I'll see them sign'd, or die for't.

Sir Jeal. Zounds! sirrah, I'll be reveng'd on you.

[*Beats MARPLOT.*

Sir Geo. Ay, there your vengeance is due. Ha, ha!

Mar. Why, what do you beat me for? I ha'n't marry'd your daughter.

Sir Jeal. Rascals! why don't you knock him down?

Serv. We are afraid of his sword, sir: if you'll take that from him, we'll knock him down presently.

Enter CHARLES and ISABINDA.

Sir Jeal. Seize her, then.

Cha. Rascals! retire; she's my wife; touch her if you dare;—I'll make dogs' meat of you.

Mar. Ay, I'll make dogs' meat of you, rascal.

Sir Jeal. Ah! downright English—Oh, oh, oh, oh!

Enter SIR FRANCIS GRIPE, MIRANDA, PATCH, SCENTWELL, and WHISPER.

Sir Fran. Into the house of joy we enter without knocking——Ha! I think 'tis the house of sorrow, Sir Jealous.

Sir Jeal. Oh, Sir Francis, are you come?—What! was this your contrivance, to abuse, trick, and chouse me out of my child?

Sir Fran. My contrivance! what do you mean?

Sir Jeal. No, you don't know your son there in a Spanish habit!

Sir Fran. How! my son in a Spanish habit! Sirrah, you'll come to be hang'd. Get out of my sight, ye dog? get out of my sight.

Sir Jeal. Get out of your sight, sir! get out with your bags. Let's see what you'll give him now to maintain my daughter on.

Sir Fran. Give him! he shall never be the better for a penny of mine—and you might have look'd after your daughter better, Sir Jealous, Trick'd, quotha! Egad I think you design'd to trick me: but look ye, gentlemen, I believe I shall trick you both.

Sir Geo. I shall be extremely obliged to you, Sir Francis.

Sir Fran. Ha, ha, ha, ha! poor Sir George! you see your project was of no use: does not your hundred pound stick in your stomach? ha, ha, ha!

Sir Geo. No faith, Sir Francis, this lady has given me a cordial for that. [*Takes her by the Hand.*]

Sir Fran. Hold, sir, you have nothing to say to this lady.

Sir Geo. Nor you nothing to do with my wife, sir.

Sir Fran. Wife, sir!

Miran. Ay, really, Guardian, 'tis even so. I hope you'll forgive my first offence.

Sir Fran. What, have you chous'd me out of my consent and your writings, then, mistress, ha?

Miran. Out of nothing but my own, Guardian.

Sir Jeal. Ha, ha, ha! 'tis some comfort at least to see you are over-reach'd as well as myself. Will you settle your estate upon your son now?

Sir Fran. He shall starve first.

Miran. That I have taken care to prevent. There, sir, are the writings of your uncle's estate, which have been your due these three years.

[*Gives CHARLES Papers.*]

Cha. I shall study to deserve this favour.

Mar. Now, how the devil could she get those writings, and I know nothing of it.

Sir Fran. What, have you robb'd me too, mistress? egad I'll make you restore 'em—hussy, I will so.

Sir Jeal. Take care I don't make you pay the arrears, sir. 'Tis well 'tis no worse, since 'tis no better. Come, young man, seeing thou hast outwitted me, take her, and bless you both!

Cha. I hope, sir, you'll bestow your blessing too; 'tis all I ask.

[*Kneels.*]

Mar. Do, Gardy, do.

Sir Fran. Confound you all!

[*Exit.*]

Mar. Mercy upon us, how he looks!

Sir Geo. Ha, ha, ha! ne'er mind his curses, Charles, thou'lt thrive not one jot the worse for 'em. Since this gentleman is reconcil'd, we are all made happy.

Sir Jeal. I always lov'd precaution, and took care

to avoid dangers; but when a thing was past, I ever had philosophy to be easy.

Cha. Which is the true sign of a great soul. I lov'd your daughter, and she me, and you shall have no reason to repent her choice.

Mar. So, here's every body happy I find but poor Pilgarlick. I wonder what satisfaction I shall have for being cuff'd, kick'd, and beaten in your service?

Sir Jeal. I have been a little too familiar with you, as things are fallen out; but since there's no help for't, you must forgive me.

Mar. Egad I think so—but provided that you be not so familiar for the future.

Sir Geo. Thou hast been an unlucky rogue.

Mar. But very honest.

Cha. That I'll vouch for, and freely forgive thee.

Sir Geo. And I'll do you one piece of service more, Marplot; I'll take care that Sir Francis makes you master of your estate.

Mar. That will make me as happy as any of you.

Sir Jeal. Now let us in, and refresh ourselves with a cheerful glass, in which we'll bury all animosities :
and

By my example let all parents move,
And never strive to cross their children's love :
But still submit that care to Providence above.

[*Exeunt.*]

THE END.

THE WONDER

A WOMAN KEEPS A SECRET;

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

By MRS. CENTLIVRE.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

LONDON:

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**WILLIAM SAVAGE, PRINTER,
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REMARKS.

Mrs. Centlivre, who wrote this comedy, and of whose life a short account has been given in the remarks upon her play of "The Busy Body," ranks in the first class of our comic dramatists: for though she does not possess the repartee of Congreve or Wycherly, and her dialogue, in general, is not equal even to Farquhar's, yet she discovers such happy invention in her plots, incidents, and characters; such skill in conducting the intrigues of a comedy; such art in exciting the curiosity, the anxiety, or the mirth of her auditors, that she foils both the scholar and the wit when the comparison is limited to theatrical effect.

Congreve abandoned his occupation as a dramatist in violent anger, because his "Way of the World" appeared, and was totally neglected, at the very time that a comedy by Mrs. Centlivre was brought forth, and attracted, for thirteen nights successively, a crowded theatre.

Merely as writers, the author of "The Way of the World," and the authoress of "The Wonder," hold distinct places among the literati; but as plays are productions that depend on action, and require

talents of a nature, in which writing has, perhaps, the smallest share, Mrs. Centlivre has, from the time she commenced dramatic author to the present day, through all the vicissitudes of taste which have, in that period, intervened, still been more attractive on the stage than the great poet whom her success offended.

This comedy is by far her best work. In excellence of fable, strength of character, and intricacy of occurrence, it forms one of the most entertaining exhibitions the theatre can boast.

Garrick thought Don Felix worthy his most powerful exertions, in describing the passion of jealousy; and this character was upon the list with the favourite parts he performed.

Though the scene is in Spain, and all the manners particularly adapted to that country, "The Wonder" shows the various passions and sensations of all mankind. The very servants are objects of attention and curiosity; nor is the humour they produce ever so degraded and ludicrous, as to diminish the effect of the more refined comedy of the higher personages.

Most comic writers of the present time accomplish the tedious labour of a five act drama by having recourse, alternately, to sentiment and drollery: here a long play is sustained without excursions to either; and yet, its consistency in adhering to one fixed point of entertainment, never creates satiety, nor shows a languor of invention in the author, which for a moment leaves the expectation of the auditor

unemployed, or leaves that expectation in one single instance disappointed.

Violante, in keeping a secret, is a heroine of the very first quality. To kill a tyrant, or to kill herself, is the common furious deed of a common stage virago: but for a female to hold her tongue, is a cool act of deliberate fortitude; and nothing but the improbability of the occurrence, can lessen its value with the most severe critic.

Mrs. Centlivre has somewhere said, that—"The Muses, like most females, are least liberal to their own sex." She was ungrateful if she did not acknowledge her obligations to them in the composition of this work; for they presided, with no niggardly influence, over the whole production,

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DON LOPEZ	<i>Mr. Murray.</i>
DON FELIX	<i>Mr. Kemble.</i>
DON PEDRO	<i>Mr. Munden.</i>
COLONEL BRITON	<i>Mr. Hargrave.</i>
FREDERICK	<i>Mr. Claremont.</i>
ALGUAZIL	<i>Mr. Davenport.</i>
OFFICERS	{ <i>Mr. Sarjant.</i>
	{ <i>Mr. Powers.</i>
GIBBY	<i>Mr. Emery.</i>
LISSARDO	<i>Mr. Fawcett.</i>
SANCHO	<i>Mr. Abbot.</i>
VASQUEZ	<i>Mr. Klanert.</i>
DIEGO	<i>Mr. L. Bologna.</i>
RAMON	<i>Mr. Lewiss.</i>
ISABELLA	<i>Miss Marriot.</i>
VIOLANTE	<i>Mrs. Glover.</i>
FLORA	<i>Mrs. Mattocks.</i>
INIS	<i>Mrs. Beverly.</i>

SCENE—*Lisbon.*

THE WONDER

A WOMAN KEEPS A SECRET.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

A Street.

Enter DON LOPEZ, meeting FREDERICK.

Fred. My lord, Don Lopez.

Lop. How d'ye, Frederick?

Fred. At your lordship's service. I am glad to see you look so well, my lord. I hope Antonio's out of danger?

Lop. Quite contrary; his fever increases, they tell me; and the surgeons are of opinion his wound is mortal.

Fred. Your son, Don Felix, is safe, I hope?

Lop. I hope so too; but they offer large rewards to apprehend him.

Fred. When heard your lordship from him?

Lop. Not since he went: I forbade him writing, till the public news gave him an account of Antonio's

health. Letters might be intercepted, and the place of his abode discovered.

Fred. Your caution was good, my lord. Though I am impatient to hear from Felix, yet his safety is my chief concern.

Lop. If Antonio dies, Felix shall for England.—You have been there; what sort of people are the English?

Fred. My lord, the English are by nature, what the ancient Romans were by discipline—courageous, bold, hardy, and in love with liberty.

Lop. I like their principles: who does not wish for freedom in all degrees of life? though common prudence sometimes makes us act against it, as I am now obliged to do; for I intend to marry my daughter to Don Guzman, whom I expect from Holland every day, whither he went to take possession of a large estate left him by his uncle.

Fred. You will not surely sacrifice the lovely Isabella to age, avarice, and a fool; pardon the expression, my lord, but my concern for your beauteous daughter, transports me beyond that good manners which I ought to pay your lordship's presence.

Lop. I can't deny the justness of the character, Frederick; but you are not insensible what I have suffered by these wars; and he has two things which render him very agreeable to me for a son-in-law—he is rich, and well-born: as for his being a fool, I don't conceive how that can be any blot in a husband, who is already possessed of a good estate.—A poor fool is, indeed, a very scandalous thing, and so are your poor wits, in my opinion, who have nothing to be vain of but the inside of their skulls. Now for Don Guzman—I know I can rule him as I think fit. This is acting the politic part, Frederick, without which, it is impossible to keep up the port of this life.

Fred. But have you no consideration for your daughter's welfare, my lord?

Lop. Is a husband of twenty thousand crowns a-year no consideration? Now I think it a very good consideration.

Fred. One way, my lord.—But what will the world say of such a match?

Lop. Sir, I value not the world a button.

Fred. I cannot think your daughter can have any inclination for such a husband.

Lop. There, I believe, you are pretty much in the right, though it is a secret which I never had the curiosity to inquire into, nor I believe ever shall.—Inclination, quotha! Parents would have a fine time on't if they consulted their children's inclinations!—No, no, sir, it is not a father's business to follow his children's inclinations till he makes himself a beggar.

Fred. But this is of another nature, my lord.

Lop. Lookye, sir; I resolve she shall marry Don Guzman the moment he arrives. Though I could not govern my son, I will my daughter, I assure you.

Fred. This match, my lord, is more preposterous than that which you proposed to your son, from whence arose this fatal quarrel.—Don Antonio's sister, Elvira, wanted beauty only, but Guzman every thing but—

Lop. Money—and that will purchase every thing; and so adieu. [Exit.]

Fred. Monstrous! these are the resolutions which destroy the comforts of matrimony.—Lissardo! from whence came you?

Enter LISSARDO, in a Riding Habit.

Liss. That letter will inform you, sir.

Fred. I hope your master's safe?

Liss. I left him so; I have another to deliver,

which requires haste.—Your most humble servant,
sir. [Bowing.]

Fred. To Violante, I suppose.

Liss. The same.

[Exit.]

Fred. [Reads.] *Dear Frederick,—The two chief blessings of this life, are a friend and a mistress; to be debarred the sight of those, is not to live. I hear nothing of Antonio's death, and therefore resolve to venture to thy house this evening, impatient to see Violante, and embrace my friend. Yours,*

FELIX.

'Pray Heaven he comes undiscovered!—Ha! Colonel Briton!

Enter COLONEL BRITON, in a riding Habit,

Col. B. Frederick, I rejoice to see thee.

Fred. What brought you to Lisbon, Colonel?

Col. B. *La fortune de la guerre*, as the French say. I have commanded these three last years in Spain; but my country has thought fit to strike up a peace, and give us good protestants leave to hope for christian burial; so I resolved to take Lisbon in my way home.

Fred. If you are not provided of a lodging, Colonel, pray command my house while you stay.

Col. B. If I were sure I should not be troublesome, I would accept your offer, Frederick.

Fred. So far from trouble, Colonel, I shall take it as a particular favour. What have we here?

Col. B. My footman: this is our country dress, you must know: which, for the honour of Scotland, I make all my servants wear.

Enter GIBBY, in a Highland Dress.

Gibby. What mun I de with the horses, and like yer honour? They will tack cald gin they stand in the causeway.

Fred. Oh, I'll take care of them. What, ho! Vasquez!

Enter VASQUEZ.

Put those horses, which that honest fellow will show you, into my stable, do you hear? and feed them well.

Vas. Yes, sir.—Sir, by my master's orders, I am, sir, your most obsequious humble servant. Be pleased to lead the way.

Gibby. 'Sbleed! gang your gate, sir, and I sall follow ye. Ise tee hungry to feed on compliments.

[Exeunt GIBBY and VASQUEZ.]

Fred. Ha! ha! a comical fellow!—Well, how do you like our country, Colonel?

Col. B. Why, 'faith, Frederick, a man might pass his time agreeably enough within side of a nunnery; but to behold such troops of soft, plump, tender, melting, wishing, nay, willing girls too, through a damned grate, gives us Britons strong temptations to plunder. Harkye, hast thou never a pretty acquaintance now that thou wouldst consign over to a friend for half an hour, ha?

Fred. 'Faith, Colonel, I am the worst pimp in Christendom; you had better trust to your own luck: the women will soon find you out, I warrant you.

Col. B. Ay, but it is dangerous foraging in an enemy's country; and since I have some hopes of seeing my own again, I had rather purchase my pleasure, than run the hazard of a stiletto in my guts. Wilt thou recommend me to a wife then! ha, friend?

Fred. She must be very handsome, I suppose?

Col. B. The handsomer the better.

Fred. And rich, I suppose?

Col. B. Oh, very rich;—I shall never be able to swallow the matrimonial pill, if it be not well gilded.

Fred. Puh ! beauty will make it slide down nimbly.

Col. B. At first, perhaps, it may ; but the second or third dose will choke me.—I confess, Frederick, women are the prettiest playthings in nature ; but gold, substantial gold ! gives them the air, the mien, the shape, the grace, and beauty of a goddess.

Fred. And has not gold the same divinity in their eyes, Colonel ?

Col. B. Too often—

None marry now for love,—no, that's a jest :
The self-same bargain serves for wife and beast.

Fred. You are always gay, Colonel. Come, shall we take a refreshing glass at my house, and consider what has been said ?

Col. B. I have two or three compliments to discharge for some friends, and then I shall wait on you with pleasure. Where do you live ?

Fred. At yon' corner house, with the green rails.

Col. B. In the close of the evening I will endeavour to kiss your hand. Adieu. *[Exit.*

Fred. I shall expect you with impatience. *[Exit.*

SCENE II.

A Room in DON LOPEZ'S House.

Enter ISABELLA and INIS.

Inis. For goodness' sake, madam, where are you going in this pet ?

Isab. Any where to avoid matrimony. The thoughts of a husband are as terrible to me as the sight of a hobgoblin.

Inis. Ay, of an old husband: but if you may chuse for yourself, I fancy matrimony would be no such frightful thing to you.

Isab. You are pretty much in the right, *Inis*: but to be forced into the arms of an idiot, who has neither person to please the eye, sense to charm the ear, nor generosity to supply these defects! Ah, *Inis*! what pleasant lives women lead in England, where duty wears no fetter but inclination! The custom of our country enslaves us from our very cradles, first to our parents, next to our husbands, and when Heaven is so kind as to rid us of both these, our brothers still usurp authority, and expect a blind obedience from us; so that maids, wives, or widows, we are little better than slaves to the tyrant, man.—Therefore, to avoid their power, I resolve to cast myself into a monastery.

Inis. That is, you'll cut your own throat to avoid another's doing it for you. Ah, madam, those eyes tell me you have no nun's flesh about you. A monastery, quotha!—Odslife, madam, you are the first woman that ever despaired in a christian country.—Were I in your place——

Isab. Why, what would your wisdom do if you were?

Inis. I'd embark with the first fair wind with all my jewels, and seek my fortune on t'other side the water: no shore can treat you worse than your own. There's ne'er a father in Christendom should make me marry any man against my will.

Isab. I am too great a coward to follow your advice. I must contrive some way to avoid Don Guzman, and yet stay in my own country.

Enter DON LOPEZ.

Lop. Must you so, mistress? but I shall take care to prevent you. [*Aside.*] Isabella, whither are you going, my child?

Isab. To church, sir.

Inis. The old rogue has certainly overheard her!

[*Aside.*

Lop. Your devotion must needs be very strong, or your memory very weak, my dear. Why, vespers are over for this night. Come, come, you shall have a better errand to church than to say your prayers there. Don Guzman is arrived in the river, and I expect him a-shore to-morrow.

Isab. Ha! to-morrow!

Lop. He writes me word that his estate in Holland is worth twelve thousand crowns a-year; which, together with what he had before, will make thee the happiest wife in Lisbon.

Isab. And the most unhappy woman in the world.—Oh, sir, if I have any power in your heart—if the tenderness of a father be not quite extinct, hear me with patience.

Lop. No objection against the marriage, and I will hear whatsoever thou hast to say.

Isab. That's torturing me on the rack, and forbidding me to groan. Upon my knees I claim the privilege of flesh and blood.

[*Kneels.*

Lop. I grant it; thou shalt have an armful of flesh and blood to-morrow.—Flesh and blood, quotha!—Heaven forbid I should deny thee flesh and blood, my girl!

Inis. Here's an old dog for you!

[*Aside.*

Isab. Do not mistake, sir. The fatal stroke which separates soul and body, is not more terrible to the thoughts of sinners, than the name of Guzman to my ear.

Lop. Puh, puh! you lie, you lie!

Isab. My frightened heart beats hard against my breast, as if it sought a passage to your feet, to beg you'd change your purpose.

Lop. A very pretty speech, this; if it were turned into blank verse, it would serve for a tragedy. Why, thou hast more wit than I thought thou hadst, child. I fancy this was all *extempore*; I don't believe thou didst ever think one word on't before.

Inis. Yes, but she has, my lord; for I have heard her say the same things a thousand times.

Lop. How, how—What do you top your second-hand jests upon your father, hussy, who knows better what's good for you than you do yourself?—Remember, 'tis your duty to obey.

Isab. [*Rising.*] I never disobeyed before, and I wish I had not reason now; but nature hath got the better of my duty, and makes me loath the harsh commands you lay.

Lop. Ha! ha!—Very fine! ha! ha!

Isab. Death itself would be more welcome.

Lop. Are you sure of that?

Isab. I am your daughter, my lord, and can boast as strong a resolution as yourself. I'll die before I'll marry Guzman.

Lop. Say you so? I'll try that presently. [*Draws.*] Here, let me see with what dexterity you can breathe a vein now. [*Offers her his Sword.*] The point is pretty sharp—'twill do your business, I warrant you.

Inis. Bless me, sir! What, do you mean to put a sword into the hands of a desperate woman?

Lop. Desperate! ha! ha! ha! you see how desperate she is. What, art thou frightened, little Bell?—Ha!

Isab. I confess I am startled at your morals, sir.

Lop. Ay, ay, child, thou hadst better take the man he'll hurt thee the least of the two.

Isab. I shall take neither, sir: Death has many

doors; and when I can live no longer with pleasure, I shall find one to let him in at without your aid.

Lop. Say'st thou so, my dear Bell? Ods, I'm afraid thou art a little lunatic, Bell. I must take care of thee, child. [*Takes hold of her.*] I shall make bold to secure thee, my dear; I'll see if locks and bars can keep thee till Guzman come. Go, get into your chamber: [*Locks her in.*]

There I'll your boasted resolution try,
And see who'll get the better, you or I.
[*Drives off INIS, and exit.*]

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

A Room in DON PEDRO'S House.

Enter DONNA VIOLANTE, reading a Letter, and FLORA following.

Flora. What, must that letter be read again?

Vio. Yes, and again, and again, and again, a thousand times again; a letter from a faithful lover can never be read too often; it speaks such kind, such soft, such tender things—— [*Kisses it.*]

Flora. But always the same language.

Vio. It does not charm the less for that.

Flora. In my opinion, nothing charms that does not change: and any composition of the four-and-twenty letters, after the first essay, from the same hand, must be dull, except a bank note, or a bill of exchange.

Vio. Thy taste is my aversion.— [Reads.

My all that's charming, since life's not life, exiled from thee, this night shall bring me to thy arms. Frederick and thee are all I trust. These six week's absence has been in love's account six hundred years.—When it is dark, expect the wonted signal at thy window: till when, adieu. Thine, more than his own,

FELIX.

Flora. Who would not have said as much to a lady of her beauty, and twenty thousand pounds?—Were I a man, methinks I could have said a hundred finer things.

Vio. What would you have said?

Flora. I would have compared your eyes to the stars, your teeth to ivory, your lips to coral, your neck to alabaster, your shape to——

Vio. No more of your bombast; truth is the best eloquence in a lover.—What proof remains ungiven of his love? When his father threatened to disinherit him for refusing Don Antonio's sister, from whence sprung this unhappy quarrel, did it shake his love for me? and now, though strict inquiry runs through every place, with large rewards to apprehend him, does he not venture all for me?

Flora. But you know, madam, your father, Don Pedro, designs you for a nun—to be sure, you look very like a nun!—and says, your grandfather left you your fortune upon that condition.

Vio. Not without my approbation, girl, when I come to one-and-twenty, as I am informed. But,

however, I shall run the risk of that. Go, call in Lissardo.

Flora. Yes, madam. Now for a thousand verbal questions. [Exit.]

Enter FLORA, with LISSARDO.

Vio. Well, and how do you do, Lissardo?

Liss. Ah, very weary, madam.—'Faith, thou look'st wondrous pretty, Flora! [Aside to FLORA.]

Vio. How came you?

Liss. En chevalier, madam, upon a hackney jade, which they told me formerly belonged to an English colonel; but I should have rather thought she had been bred a good Roman Catholic all her life time—for she down'd on her knees to every stock and stone we came along by.—My chops water for a kiss, they do, Flora. [Aside to FLORA.]

Flora. You'd make one believe you are wondrous fond now.

Vio. Where did you leave your master?

Liss. Od, if I had you alone, housewife, I'd show you how fond I could be.— [Aside to FLORA.]

Vio. Where did you leave your master?

Liss. At a little farmhouse, madam, about five miles off. He'll be at Don Frederick's in the evening.—Od, I will so revenge myself of those lips of thine.

[To FLORA.]

Vio. Is he in health?

Flora. Oh, you counterfeit wondrous well.

[To LISSARDO.]

Liss. No; every body knows I counterfeit very ill.

[To FLORA.]

Vio. How say you? Is Felix ill? What's his distemper? ha?

Liss. A pize on't, I hate to be interrupted.—Love, madam, love—In short, madam, I believe he has thought of nothing but your ladyship ever since he

left Lisbon. I am sure he could not, if I may judge of his heart by my own.

[*Looking lovingly upon FLORA.*

Vio. How came you so well acquainted with your master's thoughts, Lissardo?

Liss. By an infallible rule, madam; words are the pictures of the mind, you know: now, to prove he thinks of nothing but you, he talks of nothing but you.—For example, madam, coming from shooting t'other day, with a brace of partridges, Lissardo, said he, go bid the cook roast me these Violantes.—I flew into the kitchen, full of thoughts of thee, cried, Here, Cook, roast me these Floras. [To FLORA.

Flora. Ha! ha! excellent!—You mimic your master, then, it seems.

Liss. I can do every thing as well as my master, you little rogue.—Another time, madam, the priest came to make him a visit, he called out hastily, Lissardo, said he, bring a Violante for my father to sit down on.—Then he often mistook my name, madam, and called me Violante: in short, I heard it so often, that it became as familiar to me as my prayers.

Vio. You live very merrily then, it seems.

Liss. Oh, exceeding merry, madam!

[*Kisses FLORA'S Hand.*

Vio. Ha! exceeding merry! had you treats and balls?

Liss. Oh! yes, yes, madam, several.

Flora. You are mad, Lissardo; you don't mind what my lady says to you. . . [Aside to LISSARDO.

Vio. Ha! balls!—Is he so merry in my absence? And did your master dance, Lissardo?

Liss. Dance, madam! where, madam?

Vio. Why, at those balls you speak of.

Liss. Balls! what balls, madam?

Vio. Why, sure you are in love, Lissardo? did not you say, but now, you had balls where you have been?

Liss. Balls, madam ! Odslife, I ask your pardon, madam ! I, I, I, had mislaid some wash-balls of my master's t'other day ; and because I could not think where I had laid them, just when he asked for them, he very fairly broke my head, madam ; and now, it seems, I can think of nothing else. Alas ! he dance, madam ! No, no, poor gentleman ! he is as melancholy as an unbraced drum.

Vio. Poor Felix ! There, wear that ring for your master's sake, and let him know I shall be ready to receive him. [Exit.

Liss. I shall, madam.—[*Puts on the Ring.*] Methinks a diamond ring is a vast addition to the little finger of a gentleman. [Admiring his Hand.

Flora. That ring must be mine.—Well, Lissardo, what haste you make to pay off arrears now ! Look how the fellow stands !

Liss. Egad, methinks I have a very pretty hand—and very white—and the shape !——'Faith, I never minded it so much before—In my opinion, it is a very fine shaped hand—and becomes a diamond ring as well as the first grandee's in Portugal.

Flora. The man's transported ! Is this your love, this your impatience ?

Liss. [*Takes Snuff.*] Now, in my mind—I take snuff with a very jantee air—Well, I am persuaded I want nothing but a coach and a title to make me a very fine gentleman. [Struts about.

Flora. Sweet Mr. Lissardo ! [*Courtesying.*] if I may presume to speak to you without affronting your little finger——

Liss. Odsso, madam, I ask your pardon—Is it to me, or to the ring—you direct your discourse, madam ?

Flora. Madam ! Good lack ! how much a diamond ring improves one !

Liss. Why, though I say it, I can carry myself as well as any body—But what wert thou going to say, child ?

Flora. Why, I was going to say that I fancy you had best let me keep that ring: it will be a very pretty wedding ring, Lissardo, would it not?

Liss. Humph! ah! But—but—but—I believe I shan't marry yet a while.

Flora. You shan't, you say!—Very well! I suppose you design that ring for Inis.

Liss. No, no; I never bribe an old acquaintance—Perhaps I might let it sparkle in the eyes of a stranger a little, till we come to a right understanding—but then, like all other mortal things, it would return from whence it came.

Flora. Insolent!—Is that your manner of dealing?

Liss. With all but thee—Kiss me, you little rogue, you. [Hugging her.]

Flora. Little rogue! Pr'ythee, fellow, don't be so familiar; [Pushing him away.] if I may'nt keep your ring, I can keep my kisses.

Liss. You can, you say! Spoke with the air of a chambermaid.

Flora. Replied with the spirit of a serving man.

Liss. Pr'ythee, Flora, don't let you and I fall out; I am in a merry humour, and shall certainly fall in somewhere.

Flora. What care I where you fall in?

Enter DONNA VIOLANTE.

Vio. Why do you keep Lissardo so long, Flora, when you don't know how soon my father may awake? his afternoon naps are never long.

Flora. Had Don Felix been with her, she would not have thought the time long. These ladies consider nobody's wants but their own. [Aside.]

Vio. Go, go, let him out.

Flora. Yes, madam.

Liss. I fly, madam. [Exeunt LISSARDO and FLORA.]

Vio. The day draws in, and night, the lover's friend, advances—night, more welcome than the sun to me, because it brings my love.

Flora. [*Shrieks within.*] Ah, thieves! thieves! Murder! murder!

Vio. [*Shrieks.*] Ah! defend me, Heaven! What do I hear? Felix is certainly pursued, and will be taken.

Enter FLORA, running.

How now? why dost stare so? Answer me quickly? what's the matter?

Flora. Oh, madam! as I was letting out Lissardo, a gentleman rushed between him and I, struck down my candle, and is bringing a dead person in his arms into our house.

Vio. Ha! a dead person! Heaven grant it does not prove my Felix!

Flora. Here they are, madam.

Vio. I'll retire till you discover the meaning of this accident. [*Exit.*]

Enter COLONEL BRITON, with DONNA ISABELLA in his Arms; sets her down in a Chair, and addresses himself to FLORA.

Col. B. Madam, the necessity this lady was under of being conveyed into some house with speed and secrecy, will, I hope, excuse any indecency I might be guilty of in pressing so rudely into this—I am an entire stranger to her name and circumstances—would I were so to her beauty too! [*Aside.*—I commit her, madam, to your care, and fly to make her retreat secure, if the street be clear: permit me to return, and learn from her own mouth if I can be further serviceable. Pray, madam, how is the lady of this house called?

Flora. Violante, signior.

Col. B. Are you she, madam?

Flora. Only her woman, signior.

Col. B. Your humble servant, mistress. Pray, be careful of the lady.——

[*Gives her two Moidores, and exit.*]

Flora. Two moidores! Well, he is a generous fellow! This is the only way to make one careful.

Enter DONNA VIOLANTE.

Vio. Was you distracted, Flora, to tell my name to a man you never saw! Unthinking wench! who knows what this may turn to?——What, is the lady dead? Ah! defend me, Heaven! 'tis Isabella, sister to my Felix! What has befallen her? 'Pray Heaven he's safe!—Run and fetch some cold water.—Stay, stay, Flora.—Isabella, friend, speak to me; Oh! speak to me, or I shall die with apprehension.

Isab. Oh, hold, my dearest father! do not force me; indeed I cannot love him.

Vio. How wild she talks!——

Isab. Ha! where am I?

Vio. With one as sensible of thy pain as thou thyself canst be.

Isab. Violante! what kind star preserved and lodged me here?

Flora. It was a terrestrial star, called a man, madam; 'pray Jupiter he proves a lucky one!

Isab. Oh, I remember now. Forgive me, dear Violante! my thoughts ran so much upon the danger I escaped, I forgot.

Vio. May I not know your story?

Isab. Thou art no stranger to one part of it. I have often told thee that my father designed to sacrifice me to Don Guzman, who, it seems, is just returned from Holland, and expected ashore to-morrow, the day that he has set to celebrate our nuptials. Upon my refusing to obey him, he locked me into my chamber, vowing to keep me there till he ar-

rived, and force me to consent. I know my father to be positive, never to be won from his design; and having no hope left me to escape the marriage, I leaped from the window into the street.

Vio. You have not hurt yourself, I hope?

Isab. No; a gentleman passing by, by accident, caught me in his arms: at first, my fright made me apprehend it was my father, till he assured me to the contrary.

Flora. He is a very fine gentleman, I promise you, madam, and a well bred man, I warrant him. I think I never saw a grandee put his hand into his pocket with a better air in my whole lifetime; then he opened his purse with such a grace, that nothing but his manner of presenting me with the gold could equal.

Vio. Go, leave us, Flora.—But how came you hither, Isabella?

Isab. I know not; I desired the stranger to convey me to the next monastery, but ere I reach'd the door, I saw, or fancied that I saw, Lissardo, my brother's man, and the thought, that his master might not be far off, flung me into a swoon, which is all that I can remember.—Ha! what's here? [*Takes up a Letter.*] *For Colonel Briton, to be left at the post-house in Lisbon.* This must be dropped by the stranger which brought me hither.

Vio. Thou art fallen into the hands of a soldier; take care he does not lay thee under contribution, girl.

Isab. I find he is a gentleman, and if he is but unmarried, I could be content to follow him all the world over.—But I shall never see him more, I fear.

[*Sighs, and pauses.*]

Vio. What makes you sigh, Isabella?

Isab. The fear of falling into my father's clutches again.

Vio. Can I be serviceable to you?

Isab. Yes, if you conceal me two or three days.

Vio. You may command my house, and secrecy.

Isab. I thank you, Violante. I wish you would oblige me with Mrs. Flora a while.

Vio. I'll send her to you.—I must watch if dad be still asleep, or here will be no room for Felix. [*Exit.*]

Isab. Well, I don't know what ails me; methinks I wish I could find this stranger out.

Enter FLORA.

Flora. Does your ladyship want me, madam?

Isab. Ay, Mrs. Flora: I resolve to make you my confidant.

Flora. I shall endeavour to discharge my duty, madam.

Isab. I doubt it not, and desire you to accept this, as a token of my gratitude.

Flora. Oh, dear signora! I should have been your humble servant without a fee.

Isab. I believe it—But to the purpose——Do you think, if you saw the gentleman which brought me hither, you should know him again?

Flora. From a thousand, madam; I have an excellent memory where an handsome man is concerned. When he went away, he said he would return again immediately. I admire he comes not.

Isab. Here, did you say? You rejoice me——though I'll not see him if he comes. Could not you contrive to give him a letter?

Flora. With the air of a duenna——

Isab. Not in this house—you must veil and follow him—He must not know it comes from me.

Flora. What, do you take me for a novice in love affairs? Though I have not practised the art since I have been in Donna Violante's service, yet I have not lost the theory of a chambermaid—Do you write the letter, and leave the rest to me.—Here, here, here's pen, ink, and paper.

Isab. I'll do it in a minute. [*Sits down to write.*]

Flora. So! this is a business after my own heart.—Love always takes care to reward his labourers, and Great Britain seems to be his favourite country.—Oh! I long to see the other two moidores with a British air—Methinks there's a grace peculiar to that nation in making a present.

Isab. So, I have done. Now, if he does but find this house again!

Flora. If he should not—I warrant I'll find him, if he's in Lisbon; for I have a strong possession that he has two moidores, as good as ever was told.

[*Puts the Letter into her Bosom.*]

Enter DONNA VIOLANTE.

Vio. Flora, watch my father; he's fast asleep in his study: if you find him stir, give me notice. [*COLONEL BRITON taps at the Window.*] Hark! I hear Felix at the window! admit him instantly, and then to your post. [*Exit FLORA.*]

Isab. What say you, Violante? is my brother come?

Vio. It is his signal at the window.

Isab. [*Kneels.*] Oh, Violante! I conjure you, by all the love thou bear'st to Felix, by thy own generous nature; nay, more, by that unspotted virtue thou art mistress of, do not discover to my brother I am here.

Vio. Contrary to your desire, be assured, I never shall. But where's the danger?

Isab. Art thou born in Lisbon, and ask that question? He'll think his honour blemished by my disobedience, and would restore me to my father, or kill me; therefore, dear, dear girl——

Vio. Depend upon my friendship; nothing shall draw the secret from these lips, not even Felix, though at the hazard of his love. I hear him coming; retire into that closet.

Isab. Remember, Violante, upon thy promise my very life depends. [Exit.

Vio. When I betray thee, may I share thy fate.

Enter DON FELIX.

My Felix, my everlasting love! [Runs into his Arms.

Fel. My life! my soul! my Violante!

Vio. What hazards dost thou run for me!—Oh how shall I requite thee?

Fel. If during this tedious painful exile thy thoughts have never wandered from thy Felix, thou hast made me more than satisfaction.

Vio. Can there be room within this heart for any but thyself? No; if the god of love were lost to all the rest of human kind, thy image would secure him in my breast: I am all truth, all love, all faith, and know no jealous fears.

Fel. My heart's the proper sphere where love resides: could he quit that, he would be nowhere found; and yet, Violante, I'm in doubt.

Vio. Did I ever give thee cause to doubt, my Felix?

Fel. True love has many fears, and fear as many eyes as fame; yet sure I think they see no fault in thee. [COLONEL taps again.] What's that?

[Taps again.

Vio. What! I heard nothing.

[Again.

Fel. Ha! What means this signal at your window?

Vio. Somewhat, perhaps, in passing by, might accidentally hit it; it can be nothing else.

Col. B. [Within.] Hist, hist, Donna Violante! Donna Violante!

Fel. They use your name by accident too, do they, madam?

Enter FLORA.

Flora. There is a gentleman at the window, ma-

dam, which I fancy to be him who brought Isabella hither. Shall I admit him? [*Aside to VIOLANTE.*

Vio. Admit distraction rather! Thou art the cause of this, unthinking wretch. [*Aside to FLORA.*

Fel. What, has Mrs. Scout brought you fresh intelligence?

Flora. Scout! I scorn your words, seignor.

Vio. Nay, nay, nay, you must not leave me.

[*Catches hold of him.*

Fel. Oh! 'tis but fair to answer the gentleman, madam! it is none of his fault that his visit proves unseasonable! Pray let me go; my presence is but a restraint upon you. [*Struggles to get from her.*

Vio. Was ever accident so mischievous! [*Aside.*

Flora. It must be the colonel.—Now to deliver my letter to him. [*Exit,—The COLONEL taps louder.*

Fel. Hark! he grows impatient at your delay.—Why do you hold the man, whose absence would oblige you? Pray, let me go, madam. Consider, the gentleman wants you at the window.

[*Struggles still.*

Vio. It is not me he wants.

Fel. Death! not you! Is there another of your name in the house? But come on, convince me of the truth of what you say; open the window; if his business does not lie with you, your conversation may be heard. This, and only this, can take off my suspicion.—What, do you pause? Oh! guilt, guilt! Have I caught you? Nay, then, I'll leap the balcony. If I remember, this way leads to it.

[*Breaks from her, and goes to the Door where ISABELLA is.*

Vio. Hold! hold! hold! hold! not for the world you enter there. Which way shall I preserve his sister from his knowledge? [*Aside.*

Fel. What, have I touched you? Do you fear your lover's life?

WONDER.



HEN FELLE — PRAY LET ME GO MADAM. CONSIDER THE
GENTLEMAN WANTS YOU AT THE WINDOW.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

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Vio. I fear for none but you.—For goodness sake, do not speak so loud, my Felix. If my father hears you, I am lost for ever; that door opens into his apartment. What shall I do if he enters? There he finds his sister.—If he goes out, he'll quarrel with the stranger.—Felix! Felix! Your curiosity shall be satisfied. [*Goes to the Window, and throws up the Sash.*] Whoe'er you are, that with such insolence dare use my name, and give the neighbourhood pretence to reflect upon my conduct, I charge you instantly to be gone, or expect the treatment you deserve.

Col. B. I ask pardon, madam, and will obey: but when I left this house to-night——

Fel. Good!

Vio. It is most certainly the stranger. [*Aside.*]—You are mistaken in the house, I suppose, sir.

Fel. No, no; he's not mistaken.—Pray, madam, let the gentleman go on.

Vio. Pray, be gone, sir; I know of no business you have here.

Col. B. I wish I did not know it neither.—But this house contains my soul; then can you blame my body for hovering about it?

Fel. Excellent!

Vio. I tell you again you are mistaken; however, for your own satisfaction, call to-morrow.

Fel. Matchless impudence! An assignation before my face!—No, he shall not live to meet your wishes.

[*Takes out a Pistol, and goes towards the Window; she catches hold of him.*]

Vio. Ah! [*Shrieks.*] Hold, I conjure you.

Col. B. To-morrow's an age, madam! may I not be admitted to-night?

Vio. If you be a gentleman, I command your absence.—Unfortunate! what will my stars do with me? [*Aside.*]

Col. B. I have done—only this——be careful of my life, for it is in your keeping.

[*Exit from the Window.*

Fel. Pray observe the gentleman's request, madam.

[*Walking off from her.*

Vio. I am all confusion.

[*Aside.*

Fel. You are all truth, all love, all faith! oh, thou all woman!—How have I been deceived!—'Sdeath! could you not have imposed upon me for this one night? Could neither my faithful love, nor all the hazard I have run to see you, make me worthy to be cheated on?—Oh, thou——

Vol. Can I bear this from you?

[*Weeps.*

Fel. [*Repeats.*] When I left this house to-night—To-night! the devil! return so soon!

Vio. Oh, Isabella! what hast thou involved me in!

[*Aside.*

Fel. [*Repeats.*] This house contains my soul!—Sweet soul!

Vio. Yet I resolve to keep the secret.

[*Aside.*

Fel. [*Repeats.*] Be careful of my life, for it is in your keeping.——Damnation!—How ugly she appears!

[*Looking at her.*

Vio. Do not look so sternly on me; but believe me, Felix, I have not injured you, nor am I false.

Fel. Not false! not injured me! Oh, Violante, lost and abandoned to thy vice! Not false! Oh, monstrous!

Vio. Indeed I am not.—There is a cause which I must not reveal.—Oh, think how far honour can oblige your sex—then allow a woman may be bound by the same rule to keep a secret.

Fel. Honour! what hast thou to do with honour? Thou that canst admit plurality of lovers?—A secret! ha! ha! ha!—His affairs are wondrous safe who trusts his secret to a woman's keeping. But you need give yourself no trouble about clearing

this point, madam, for you are become so indifferent to me, that your truth and falsehood are the same.

Enter FLORA.

Flora. So, I have delivered my letter to the colonel. [*Aside.*] Madam, your father bade me see what noise that was.—For goodness sake, sir, why do you speak so loud?

Fel. I understand my cue, mistress; my absence is necessary; I'll oblige you.

[Going, she takes hold of him.]

Vio. Oh, let me undeceive you first!

Fel. Impossible!

Vio. 'Tis very possible, if I durst.

Fel. Durst! ha! ha! ha!—Durst, quotha!

Vio. But another time I'll tell thee all.

Fel. Nay, now or never——

Vio. Now it cannot be.

Fel. Then it shall never be.—Thou most ungrateful of thy sex, farewell!

[Breaks from her, and exit.]

Vio. Oh, exquisite trial of my friendship! Yet, not even this shall draw the secret from me.

That I'll preserve, let fortune frown or smile;
And trust to Love, my love to reconcile. [*Exit.*]

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

A Chamber in DON LOPEZ's House.

Enter DON LOPEZ.

Lop. Was ever man thus plagued? Odsheart, I could swallow my dagger for madness. I know not what to think: sure Frederick had no hand in her escape.—She must get out of the window, and she could not do that without a ladder; and who could bring it to her but him? Ay, it must be so! This graceless baggage!—But I'll to Frederick immediately; I'll take the alguazil with me, and search his house; and if I find her I'll use her—by St. Anthony I don't know how I'll use her! *[Exit.*

SCENE II.

The Street.

Enter COLONEL BRITON, with ISABELLA's Letter in his Hand, and GIBBY following.

Col. B. Well, though I could not see my fair incognita, Fortune, to make me amends, has flung another

intrigue in my way. Oh, how I love these pretty, kind, coming females, that won't give a man the trouble of racking his invention to deceive them!—This letter I received from a lady in a veil—some duenna, some necessary implement of Cupid. I suppose the style is frank and easy, I hope like her that writ it. [*Reads.*] *Sir, I have seen your person, and like it,—very concise,—and if you'll meet at four o'clock in the morning, upon the Terriero de Passa, half an hour's conversation will let me into your mind.*—Ha! ha! ha! a philosophical wench! This is the first time I ever knew a woman had any business with the mind of a man.—*If your intellects answer your outward appearance, the adventure may not displease you. I expect you'll not attempt to see my face, nor offer any thing unbecoming the gentleman I take you for.*—Humph, the gentleman she takes me for! I hope she takes me to be flesh and blood, and then I am sure I shall do nothing unbecoming a gentleman. Well, if I must not see her face, it shall go hard if I don't know where she lives.—Gibby!

Gibby. Here, an lik yer honour.

Col. B. Follow me at a good distance, do you hear, Gibby?

Gibby. In troth dee I, weel enough, sir.

Col. B. I am to meet a lady upon the *Terriero de passa*.

Gibby. The deel an mine eyn gin I ken her, sir.

Col. B. But you will when you come there, sirrah.

Gibby. Like enough, sir; I have as sharp an eyn tull a bonny lass as ere a lad in aw Scotland. And what mun I dee wi' her, sir?

Col. B. Why, if she and I part, you must watch her home, and bring me word where she lives.

Gibby. In troth sal I, sir, gin the deel tak her not.

Col. B. Come along then, it is pretty near the time.

I like a woman that rises early to pursue her inclination.

Thus we improve the pleasure of the day,
While tasteless mortals sleep their time away.
[Exit.]

SCENE III.

FREDERICK'S *House*.

Enter INIS and LISSARDO.

Liss. Your lady run away, and you know not whither, say you?

Inis. She never greatly cared for me, after finding you and I together. But you are very grave methinks, Lissardo.

Liss. [*Looking on the Ring.*] Not at all—I have some thoughts, indeed of altering my course of living: there is a critical minute in every man's life, which, if he can but lay hold of, he may make his fortune.

Inis. Ha! what do I see? A diamond ring!—Where the deuce had he that ring? You have got a very pretty ring there, Lissardo.

Liss. Ay, the trifle is pretty enough—but the lady who gave it to me is a bona roba in beauty, I assure you.

[*Cocks his Hat, and struts.*]

Inis. I can't bear this.—The lady! what lady, pray?

Liss. O fie! there's a question to ask a gentleman!

Inis. A gentleman! why the fellow's spoiled! Is

this your love for me? Ungrateful man! you'll break my heart, so you will! [*Bursts into Tears.*]

Liss. Poor tender-hearted fool!—

Inis. If I knew who gave you that ring, I'd tear her eyes out, so I would! [*Sobs.*]

Liss. So, now the jade wants a little coaxing.—Why, what dost weep for now, my dear? ha!

Inis. I suppose Flora gave you that ring; but I'll—

Liss. No, the devil take me if she did: you make me swear now.—So, they are all for the ring, but I shall bob them.—I did but joke; the ring is none of mine, it is my master's; I am to give it to be new set, that's all; therefore, pr'ythee, dry thy eyes, and kiss me; come.

Enter FLORA.

Inis. And do you really speak truth now?

Liss. Why, do you doubt it?

Flora. So, so; very well! I thought there was an intrigue between him and Inis, for all he has forsworn it so often. [*Aside.*]

Inis. Nor ha'n't you seen Flora since you came to town?

Flora. Ha! how dares she name my name?

[*Aside.*]

Liss. No, by this kiss I ha'n't. [*Kisses her.*]

Flora. Here's a dissembling varlet! [*Aside.*]

Inis. Nor don't you love her at all?

Liss. Love the devil! Why, did I not always tell thee she was my aversion?

Flora. Did you so, villain?

[*Strikes him a Box on the Ear.*]

Liss. Zounds, she here! I have made a fine spot of work on't! [*Aside.*]

Inis. What's that for? ha! [*Brushes up to her.*]

Flora. I shall tell you by and by, Mrs. Frippery, if you don't get about your business.

Inis. Who do you call Frippery, Mrs. Trollop!—Pray, get about your business, if you go to that. I hope you pretend to no right and title here?

Liss. What the devil! do they take me for an acre of land, that they quarrel about right and title to me? [Aside.]

Flora. Pray, what right have you, mistress, to ask that question?

Inis. No matter for that; I can show a better title to him than you, I believe.

Flora. What, has he given thee nine months earnest for a living title? ha! ha!

Inis. Don't fling your flaunting jests to me, Mrs. Boldface, for I won't take them, I assure you.

Liss. So! now I'm as great as the famed Alexander. But, my dear Statira and Roxana, don't exert yourselves so much about me. Now, I fancy if you would agree lovingly together, I might, in a modest way, satisfy both your demands upon me.

Flora. You satisfy! No, sirrah, I am not to be satisfied so soon as you think, perhaps!

Inis. No, nor I neither.—What! do you make no difference between us?

Flora. You pitiful fellow, you!—What, you fancy, I warrant, I gave myself the trouble of dogging you, out of love to your filthy person; but you are mistaken, sirrah!—It was to detect your treachery.—How often have you sworn to me that you hated Inis, and only carried fair for the good cheer she gave you, but that you could never like a woman with crooked legs, you said!

Inis. How, how, sirrah! crooked legs! Ods, I could find in my heart.

[Snatching up her Petticoat a little.]

Liss. Here's a lying young jade, now! Pr'ythee, my dear, moderate thy passion. [Coaxingly.]

Inis. I'd have you to know, sirrah, my legs were

never——Your master, I hope, understands legs better than you do, sirrah. *[Passionately.]*

Liss. My master!—So, so!

[Shaking his Head, and winking.]

Flora. I am glad I have done some mischief, however. *[Aside.]*

Liss. *[To INIS.]* Art thou really so foolish, to mind what an enraged woman says? Don't you see she does it on purpose to part you and I? *[Runs to FLORA.]* Could not you find the joke without putting yourself in a passion, you silly girl, you? Why, I saw you follow us plain enough, mun, and said all this, that you might not go back with only your labour for your pains.—But you are a revengeful young slut though, I tell you that; but come, kiss and be friends.

Flora. Don't think to coax me; hang your kisses.

Fel. *[Within.]* Lissardo!

Liss. Ods-heart, here's my master! The devil take both these jades for me; what shall I do with them?

Inis. Ha! 'tis Don Felix's voice; I would not have him find me here with his footman for the world!

[Aside.]

Fel. *[Within.]* Why, Lissardo! Lissardo!

Liss. Coming, sir.—What a pox will you do?

Flora. Bless me, which way shall I get out?

Liss. Nay, nay, you must e'en set your quarrel aside, and be content to be mewed up in this clothes-press together, or stay where you are, and face it out:—there is no help for it.

Flora. Put me any where rather than that; come, come, let me in. *[He opens the Press, and she goes in.]*

Inis. I'll see her hanged before I'll go into the place where she is.—I'll trust Fortune with my deliverance. Here used to be a pair of back stairs—I'll try to find them out. *[Exit.]*

Enter DON FELIX and FREDERICK.

Fel. Were you asleep, sirrah, that you did not hear me call?

Liss. I did hear you, and answered you, I was coming, sir.

Fel. Go, get the horses ready; I'll leave Lisbon to-night, never to see it more.

Liss. Hey-day! what's the matter now? [*Exit.*

Fred. Pray tell me, Don Felix, what has ruffled your temper thus?

Fel. A woman—Oh, friend! who can name woman, and forget inconstancy!

Fred. This from a person of mean education were excusable; such low suspicions have their source from vulgar conversation; men of your politer taste never rashly censure.—Come, this is some groundless jealousy.—Love raises many fears.

Fel. No, no: my ears conveyed the truth into my heart, and reason justifies my anger. Oh, my friend! Violante's false! and I have nothing left but thee in Lisbon, which can make me wish ever to see it more, except revenge upon my rival, of whom I'm ignorant. Oh, that some miracle would reveal him to me, that I might, through his heart, punish her infidelity!

Enter LISSARDO.

Liss. Oh, sir, here's your father, Don Lopez, coming up!

Fel. Does he know that I am here?

Liss. I can't tell, sir—he ask'd for Don Frederick.

Fred. Did he see you?

Liss. No, sir; for as soon as I heard him, I ran to give my master notice.

Fel. Keep out of his sight then. [*Exit* LISSARDO.] And, dear Frederick, permit me to retire into the next room; for I know the old gentleman will be

very much displeased at my return without his leave.

[*Exit.*

Fred. Quick, quick, begone! he is here!

Enter DON LOPEZ, speaking as he enters.

Lop. Mr. Alguazil, wait you without till I call for you.—Frederick, an affair brings me here—which—requires privacy—so that if you have any body within ear-shot, pray order them to retire.

Fred. We are private, my lord—speak freely.

Lop. Why then, sir, I must tell you, that you had better have pitched upon any man in Portugal to have injured, than myself.

Fred. I understand you not, my lord.

Lop. Though I am old, I have a son!—Alas, why name I him?—He knows not the dishonour of my house.

Fred. Explain yourself, my lord—I am not conscious of any dishonourable action to any man, much less to your lordship.

Lop. 'Tis false; you have debauched my daughter.

Fred. My lord, I scorn so foul a charge.

Lop. You have debauched her duty at least; therefore instantly restore her to me, or by St. Anthony I'll make you.

Fred. Restore her, my lord! where shall I find her?

Lop. I have those that will swear she is here in your house.

Fred. You are misinformed, my lord! Upon my reputation I have not seen Donna Isabella since the absence of Don Felix.

Lop. Then pray, sir—if I am not too inquisitive, what motive had you for those objections you made against her marriage with Don Guzman yesterday?

Fred. The disagreeableness of such a match, I feared, would give your daughter cause to curse her

duty, if she complied with your demands; that was all, my lord.

Lop. And so you helped her through the window, to make her disobey?

Fred. This is insulting me, my lord, when I assure you, I have neither seen, nor know, any thing of your daughter; if she is gone, the contrivance was her own, and you may thank your rigour for it.

Lop. Very well, sir; however, my rigour shall make bold to search your house. Here, call in the alguazil.

Flora. [*Peeping.*] The alguazil! What in the name of wonder, will become of me?

Fred. The alguazil! My lord, you'll repent this.

Enter ALGUAZIL, and Two OFFICERS.

Lop. No, sir, 'tis you that will repent it. I charge you, in the king's name, to assist me in finding my daughter. Be sure you leave no part of the house unsearched.—Come, follow me.

[*Gets towards the Door, where FELIX is—FREDERICK draws, and plants himself before the Door.*]

Fred. Sir, I must first know by what authority you pretend to search my house, before you enter here.

Alg. How, sir! dare you presume to draw your sword upon the representative of majesty? I am, sir, I am his majesty's alguazil, and the very quintessence of authority, therefore, put your sword up, or, I shall order you to be knocked down; for know, sir, the breath of an alguazil is as dangerous as the breath of a demi-culverin.

Lop. She is certainly in that room, by his guarding the door—If he disputes your authority, knock him down, I say.

Fred. The woman you look for, is not here; but

there is something in this room, which I'll preserve from your sight, at the hazard of my life.

Lop. Enter, I say; nothing, but my daughter, can be there.—Force his sword from him.

[*FELIX comes out, and joins FREDERICK.*]

Fel. Villains, stand off! assassinate a man in his own house!

Lop. Oh, oh, ho, misericordia! what do I see? my son!

Alg. Ha, his son! Here's five hundred pistoles, good my brethren, if Antonio dies; and that's in the surgeon's power, and he's in love with my daughter, you know, so seize him.

Lop. Hold, hold! Oh that ever I was born!

Fred. Did I not tell you, you would repent, my lord? What, ho! within there!

Enter SERVANTS.

Arm yourselves, and let not a man in, nor out, but Felix.

Fel. Generous Frederick!

Fred. Lookye, alguazil, when you would betray my friend, for filthy lucre, I shall no more regard you as an officer of justice, but, as a thief and robber, thus resist you.

Fel. Come on, sir, we'll show you play for the five hundred pistoles. [They fight.]

Lop. Hold, hold, alguazil, I'll give you the five hundred pistoles—that is, my bond, to pay upon Antonio's death, and twenty pistoles, however things go, for you and these honest fellows, to drink my health.

Alg. Say you so, my lord? Why, lookye, my lord, I bear the young gentleman no ill will, my lord. If I get but the five hundred pistoles, my lord—why, lookye, my lord, 'tis the same thing to me, whether your son be hanged, or not, my lord.

Fel. Scoundrels!—

Lop. Ay, well, thou art a goodnatured fellow,

that's the truth on't—Come then, we'll away, and sign and seal, this minute. Oh, Felix! why wouldst thou serve me thus? But I cannot upbraid thee now, nor have I time to talk. Be careful of thyself, or thou wilt break my heart.

[*Exeunt* LOPEZ, ALGUAZIL, and ATTENDANTS.]

Fel. Now, Frederick, though I ought to thank you for your care of me, yet, till I am satisfied, as to my father's accusation, (for I overheard it all) I cannot return the acknowledgments I owe you. Know you aught relating to my sister?

Fred. I hope my faith and truth are known to you; and here, by both I swear, I am ignorant of every thing relating to your father's charge.

Fel. Enough, I do believe thee. Oh, Fortune! where will thy malice end?

Enter VASQUEZ.

Vasq. Sir, I bring you joyful news.

Fel. What's the matter?

Vasq. I am told, that Don Antonio is out of danger, and now in the palace.

Fel. I wish it be true; then I'm at liberty to watch my rival, and pursue my sister. Pr'ythee, Frederick, inform thyself of the truth of this report.

Fred. I will, this minute. Do you hear? let nobody in to Don Felix, till my return. [*Exit.*]

Vasq. I'll observe, sir.

[*Exit.*]

Flo. [*Peeping.*] They have almost frightened me out of my wits, I'm sure—Now Felix is alone, I have a good mind to pretend I came with a message from my lady; but how, then, shall I say, I came into the cupboard?

Vasquez. [*Within.*] I tell you, madam, Don Felix is not here.

Violante. [*Within.*] I tell you, sir, he is here, and I will see him.

Fel. What noise is that?

Flora. [*From the Closet.*] My stars! my lady here!
[*Shuts the Press close.*

Enter VIOLANTE.

Vio. You are as difficult of access, sir, as a first minister of state.

Fel. If your visit was designed for Frederick, madam, he is abroad.

Vio. No, sir, the visit is to you.

Fel. You are very punctual in your ceremonies, madam.

Vio. Though I did not come to return your visit, but to take that, which your civility ought to have brought me.

Fel. If my eyes, my ears, and my understanding lied, then I am in your debt; else not, madam.

Vio. I will not charge them with a term so gross, to say they lied; but call it a mistake—nay, call it any thing to excuse my Felix. Could I, think ye—could I put off my pride so far, poorly to dissemble a passion which I did not feel, or seek a reconciliation, with what I did not love? and no law, whilst single, binds us to obey; but your sex, are, by nature and education, obliged to pay a deference to all womankind.

Fel. These are fruitless arguments. 'Tis most certain, thou wert dearer to these eyes, than all that Heaven e'er gave to charm the sense of man; but I would rather tear them out, than suffer them to delude my reason, and enslave my peace.

Vio. Can you love, without esteem? and, where is the esteem for her you still suspect?—Oh, Felix! there is a delicacy in love, which equals even a religious faith! True love never doubts the object it adores, and sceptics there, will disbelieve their sight.

Fel. Your notions are too refined for mine, madam,

Enter VASQUEZ.

How now, sirrah! what do you want?

Vasq. Only my master's cloak out of this press, sir, that's all.

Fel. Make haste then.

Vasq. [*Opens the Press, sees FLORA, and roars out.*]
Oh, the devil! the devil! [*Exit.*]

Flo. Discovered! nay, then, legs befriend me.

[*Runs out.*]

Vio. Ah! a woman concealed! very well, Felix.

Fel. A woman in the press!

Enter LISSARDO.

Liss. Sir, the horses are——

Fel. How the devil came a woman there, sirrah?

Liss. What shall I say now?

Vio. Now, Lissardo, show your wit, to bring your master off.

Liss. Off, madam? Nay, nay, nay, there—there needs no great wit to—to—to bring him off, madam; for she did come—

Fel. She did come!

Liss. That is, she did not come, as—as—as—a—a—a man may say directly to—to—to—to speak with my master, madam.

Vio. I see, by your stammering, Lissardo, that your invention is at a very low ebb.

Fel. 'Sdeath rascal! speak without hesitation, and the truth too, or I shall stick my spado in your guts.

Vio. No, no, your master mistakes; he would not have you speak the truth.

Fel. Madam, my sincerity wants no excuse.

Liss. I am so confounded between one and the other, that I cannot think of a lie. [*Aside.*]

Fel. Sirrah, fetch me this woman back, instantly—I'll know what business she has here.

Vio. Not a step; your master shall not be put to

the blush. Come, a truce, Felix ; do you ask me no more questions about the window, and I'll forgive this.

Fel. Madam, I scorn forgiveness, where I own no crime ; but your soul, conscious of its guilt, would fain lay hold of this occasion, to blend your treason with my innocence.

Vio. Insolent ! Nay, if, instead of owning your fault, you endeavour to insult my patience, I must tell you, sir, you don't behave yourself like that man of honour you would be taken for—you ground your quarrel with me upon your own inconstancy ; 'tis plain you are false yourself, and would make me the aggressor.—It was not for nothing the fellow opposed my entrance ; this last usage has given me back my liberty, and now, my father's will shall be obeyed, without the least reluctance ; and so your servant.

[*Exit.*

Fel. Oh, stubborn, stubborn heart ! what wilt thou do ?—Her father's will shall be obeyed !—Ha ! that carries her to a cloister, and cuts off all my hopes at once !—By Heaven, she shall not, must not leave me !—No, she is not false—Ha, villain ! art thou here ? [*Turns upon LISSARDO.*] Tell me, this moment, who this woman was, and, for what intent she was here concealed, or——

Liss. Ay, good sir ; forgive me, and I'll tell you the whole truth.

[*Falls on his Knees.*

Fel. Out with it, then—

Liss. It—it—it was Mrs. Flora, sir, Donna Violante's woman. You must know, sir, we have had a sneaking kindness for one another, a great while ; she was not willing you should know it, so, when she heard your voice, she ran into the clothes-press. I would have told you this at first, but I was afraid of her lady's knowing it. This is the whole truth, as I hope for a whole skin, sir.

Fel. If it be not, I'll not leave you a whole bone

in it, sirrah.—Fly, and observe, if Violante goes directly home.

Liss. Yes, sir, yes.

Fel. Fly, you dog, fly.—[*Exit LISSARDO.*] I must convince her of my faith. Oh, how irresolute is a lover's heart!—how absolute a woman's power!

*In vain we strive their tyranny to quit,
In vain we struggle, for we must submit.* [Exit.

SCENE IV.

The Terriero de Passa.

*Enter COLONEL BRITON, and ISABELLA, veiled.—
GIBBY at a Distance.*

Col. B. Then you say it is impossible for me to wait on you home, madam?

Isab. I say it is inconsistent with my circumstances, Colonel—and that way impossible for me to admit of it.

Col. B. Consent to go with me, then—I lodge at one Don Frederick's, a merchant, just by here; he is a very honest fellow, and I dare confide in his secrecy.

Isab. Ha! does he lodge there?—'Pray Heaven I am not discovered. [Aside.

Col. B. What say you, my charmer?—shall we breakfast together?—I have some of the best tea in the universe.

Isab. Puh! tea! is that the best treat you can give a lady, at your lodgings, Colonel?

Col. B. Well hinted—No, no, no, I have other things at thy service, child.

Isab. What are those things, pray?

Col. B. My heart, soul, and body, into the bargain.

Isab. Has the last no encumbrance upon it? Can you make a clear title, Colonel?

Col. B. All freehold, child, and I'll afford thee a very good bargain. [*Embraces her.*]

Gibby. O' my sal, they mak muckle words about it—Ise sare weary with standing, Ise e'en tak a sleep. [*Lies down.*]

Isab. If I take a lease, it must be for life, Colonel.

Col. B. Thou shalt have me, as long, or, as little time, as thou wilt, my dear. Come, let's to my lodgings, and we'll sign and seal this minute.

Isab. Oh, not so fast, Colonel; there are many things to be adjusted, before the lawyer and the parson comes.

Col. B. The lawyer and parson!—No, no, you little rogue, we can finish our affairs without the help of the law—or the gospel.

Isab. Indeed but we can't Colonel.

Col. B. Indeed!—Why, hast thou, then, trepanned me out of my warm bed, this morning, for nothing? Why, this is showing a man, half famished, a well-furnished larder, then clapping a padlock on the door, till you starve him quite.

Isab. If you can find in your heart to say grace, Colonel, you shall keep the key.

Col. B. I love to see my meat, before I give thanks, madam; therefore, uncover thy face, child, and I'll tell thee more of my mind—if I like you.

Isab. I dare not risk my reputation upon your ifs, Colonel, and so adieu. [*Going.*]

Col. B. Nay, nay, nay, we must not part.

Isab. As you ever hope to see me more, suspend your curiosity now; one step farther loses me for

ever. Show yourself a man of honour, and you shall find me a woman of honour. *[Exit.]*

Col. B. Well, for once I'll trust to a blind bargain, madam—*[Kisses her Hand, and parts.]* But I shall be too cunning for your ladyship, if Gibby observes my orders. Ha! what do I see? my rascal asleep! Sirrah, did not I charge you to watch the lady? and is it thus you observe my orders, ye dog?

[Kicks him all this while, and he shrugs, and rubs his eyes, and yawns.]

Gibby. That's true, an like yer honour; but I thought, that when yence ye had her in yer ane hands, ye might a' ordered her yer sel weel enough without me, en ye ken, en like yer honour.

Col. B. Sirrah, hold your impertinent tongue, and make haste after her. If you don't bring me some account of her, never dare to see my face again.

[Exit.]

Gibby. Ay, this is bonny wark indeed! to run three hundred mile to this wicked town, and before I can weel fill my weam to be sent a whore-hunting after this black she devil.—What gate sal I gang to speer for this wutch now? Ah, for a ruling elder—or the kirk's treasurer—or his mon—I'd gar my master mak twa' o' this; But I am sure, there's no sick honest people here, or there wud na be sa mickle sculdudrie.

[VIOLANTE crosses the Stage—GIBBY goes up to VIOLANTE.]

Gibby. I vow, madam, but I am glad that ye and I are foregathered.

Vio. What would the fellow have?

Gibby. Nothing—away, madam; wo worthy yer heart, what a muckle deal o' mischief had you like to bring upon poor Gibby!

Vio. The man's drunk.

Gibby. In troth I am not—And gin I had na found

ye, madam, the Laird knows when I should ; for my maister bade me ne'er gang hame without tidings of ye, madam.

Vio. Sirrah, get about your business, or I'll have your bones drubbed !

Gibby. Gude faith, my maister has e'en done that t'yer honds, madam.

Vio. Who is your master, sir ?

Gibby. Mony a ane speers the gate they ken right weel—it is na sa lang sen ye parted wi' him. I wish he ken ye half as weel as ye ken him.

Vio. Pugh ! the creature's mad, or mistakes me for somebody else ; and I should be as mad as he to talk to him any longer !

[*Exit VIOLANTE into DON PEDRO'S House.*]

Enter LISSARDO, at the upper End of the Stage.

Liss. So, she's gone home, I see—What did that Scots fellow want with her?—I'll try to find it out—perhaps I may discover something that may make my master friends with me again.

Gibby. Are ye gone, madam ? a deel scope in yer company, for I'm as weese as I was. But I'll bide and see wha's house it is, gin I can meet with ony civil body to speer at.—My lad, wot ye wha lives here ?

[*Turns, and sees LISSARDO.*]

Liss. Don Pedro de Mendosa.

Gibby. And did you see a lady gang in but now ?

Liss. Yes, I did.

Gibby. And d'ye ken her tee ?

Liss. It was Donna Violante, his daughter. What the devil makes him so inquisitive ? Here is something in it, that is certain. [*Aside.*] 'Tis a cold morning, brother, what think you of a dram ?

Gibby. In troth, very weel, sir.

Liss. You seem an honest fellow ; pr'ythee, let's drink to our better acquaintance.

Gibby. Wi' aw my heart, sir; gang your gate to the next house, and Ise follow ye.

Liss. Come along then.

[*Exit.*]

Gibby. Don Pedro de Mendosa! Donna Violante, his daughter!—that's as right as my leg now—Ise need na mair—I'll take a drink, and then to my maister.

Ise bring him news, will mak his heart full blee;

Gin he rewards it not, deel pimp for me.

[*Exit.*]

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

DONNA VIOLANTE'S Lodgings.

*Enter DONNA ISABELLA, in a gay temper, and
DONNA VIOLANTE, out of humour.*

Isab. My dear, I have been wishing for you this half hour, to tell you the most lucky adventure!

Vio. And you have pitched upon the most unlucky hour for it, that you could possibly have found in the whole four-and-twenty.

Isab. Hang unlucky hours! I won't think of them—I hope all my misfortunes are past.

Vio. And mine, all to come.

Isab. I have seen the man I like.

Vio. And I have seen the man that I could wish to hate.

Isab. And you must assist me in discovering, whether he can like me or not.

Vio. You have assisted me in such a discovery already, I thank ye.

Isab. What say you, my dear?

Vio. I say, I am very unlucky at discoveries, Isabella; I have too lately made one pernicious to my ease—your brother is false.

Isab. Impossible!

Vio. Most true!

Isab. Some villain has traduced him to you.

Vio. No, Isabella, I loved too well, to trust the eyes of others; I never credit the ill judging world, or form suspicions upon vulgar censures—no, I had ocular proof of his ingratitude.

Isab. Then I am most unhappy—My brother was the only pledge of faith betwixt us; if he has forfeited your favour, I have no title to your friendship.

Vio. You wrong my friendship, Isabella; your own merit entitles you to every thing within my power.

Isab. Generous maid!—But may I not know what grounds you have to think my brother false?

Vio. Another time.—But tell me, Isabella, how can I serve you?

Isab. Thus, then—The gentleman, that brought me hither, I have seen and talked with upon the Terriero de Passa, this morning, and I find him a man of sense, generosity, and good humour; in short, he is every thing that I could like for a husband, and I have despatched Mrs. Flora, to bring him hither: I hope you'll forgive the liberty I have taken.

Vio. Hither! to what purpose?

Isab. To the great universal purpose, matrimony.

Vio. Matrimony! why, do you design to ask him?

Isab. No, Violante, you must do that for me.

Vio. I thank you for the favour you design me, but desire to be excused—I manage my own affairs too ill, to be trusted with those of other people. I can't for my life, admire your conduct, to encourage a person altogether unknown to you: 'Twas very imprudent, to meet him this morning, but much more so to send for him hither, knowing what inconveniency you have already drawn upon me.

Isab. I am not insensible, how far my misfortunes have embarrassed you; and, if you please, will sacrifice my quiet to your own.

Vio. Unkindly urged!—Have I not preferred your happiness, to every thing that's dear to me?

Isab. I know thou hast—then do not deny me this last request, when a few hours, perhaps, may render my condition able to clear thy fame, and bring my brother to thy feet for pardon.

Vio. I wish you don't repent of this intrigue. I suppose he knows you are the same woman that he brought in here last night?

Isab. Not a syllable of that; I met him veiled, and, to prevent his knowing the house, I ordered Mrs. Flora to bring him by the back door, into the garden.

Vio. The very way which Felix comes; if they should meet, there would be fine work!—Indeed, my dear, I can't approve of your design.

Enter FLORA.

Flora. Madam, the colonel waits your pleasure.

Vio. How durst you go upon such a message, mistress, without acquainting me?

Flora. So, I am to be huffed for every thing.

Isab. 'Tis too late to dispute that now, dear Violante; I acknowledge the rashness of the action, but consider the necessity of my deliverance.

Vio. That, indeed, is a weighty consideration: well, what am I to do?

Isab. In the next room I'll give you instructions; In the mean time, Mrs. Flora, show the colonel into this.

Exit FLORA one Way, and ISABELLA and VIOLANTE another.]

Enter FLORA with COLONEL BRITON.

Flora. The lady will wait on you, presently, sir.

[Exit.

Col. B. Very well—this is a very fruitful soil—I have not been here quite four-and-twenty hours, and I have three intrigues upon my hands already; but I hate the chase, without partaking of the game——

Enter VIOLANTE, veiled.

Ha! a fine sized woman—'Pray Heaven, she proves handsome!—I am come to obey your ladyship's commands.

Vio. Are you sure of that, Colonel?

Col. B. If you be not very unreasonable indeed, madam.—A man is but a man.

[Takes her Hand, and kisses it.

Vio. Nay, we have no time for compliments, Colonel.

Col. B. I understand you, madam—Montrez moi votre chambre.

[Takes her in his Arms.

Vio. Nay, nay, hold, Colonel; my bed-chamber is not to be entered, without a certain purchase.

Col. B. Purchase—humph, this is some kept mistress, I suppose, who industriously lets out her leisure hours. *[Aside.]* Lookye, madam, you must consider, we soldiers are not overstocked with money, but we make ample satisfaction in love; we have a world of courage upon our hands now, you know—then, pr'ythee use a conscience, and I'll try if my pocket can come up to your price.

Vio. Nay, don't give yourself the trouble of draw-

ing your purse, Colonel, my design is levelled at your person, if that be at your own disposal.

Col. B. Ay, that it is, 'faith, madam ; and I'll settle it as firmly upon thee——

Vio. As law can do it.

Col. B. Hang law in love affairs ; thou shalt have right and title to it out of pure inclination—A matrimonial hint again. [*Aside.*

Vio. Then you have an aversion to matrimony, Colonel ? Did you never see a woman in all your travels, that you could like for a wife ?

Col. B. A very odd question—Do you really expect that I should speak truth now ?

Vio. I do, if you expect to be dealt with, Colonel.

Col. B. Why, then—yes.

Vio. Is she in your country, or this ?

Col. B. This is a very pretty kind of a catechism ! in this town, I believe, madam.

Vio. Her name is——

Col. B. Ay, how is she called, madam ?

Vio. Nay, I ask you that, sir.

Col. B. Oh, oh ! why she is called——Pray, madam, how is it you spell your name ?

Vio. Oh, Colonel, I am not the happy woman, nor do I wish it.

Col. B. No ? I am sorry for that.—What, the devil, does she mean, by all these questions ? [*Aside.*

Vio. Come, Colorel, for once, be sincere ; perhaps you may not repent it.

Col. B. This is like to be but a silly adventure, —here's so much sincerity required—[*Aside.*] 'Faith, madam, I have an inclination to sincerity, but, I'm afraid you'll call my manners in question.

Vio. Not at all ; I prefer truth before compliment, in this affair.

Col. B. Why, then, to be plain with you, madam, a lady last night wounded my heart, by a fall from a

window, whose person I could be content to take, as my father took my mother, till death do us part.—But who she is, or how distinguished, whether maid, wife, or widow, I can't inform you—perhaps you are she?

Vio. Not to keep you in suspense, I am not she; but I can give you an account of her. That lady is a maid of condition—has ten thousand pounds—and, if you are a single man, her person and fortune, are at your service.

Col. B. I accept the offer, with the highest transports! but say, my charming angel, art thou not she?
[Offers to embrace her.]

Vio. Once again, Colonel, I tell you, I am not she—but at six this evening you shall find her on the Terriero de passa, with a white handkerchief in her hand—Get a priest ready, and you know the rest.

Col. B. I shall infallibly observe your directions, madam.

Enter FLORA hastily, and whispers VIOLANTE, who starts, and seems surprised.

Vio. Ha! Felix crossing, say you? What shall I do now?

Col. B. You seem surprised, madam.

Vio. Oh, Colonel, my father is coming hither, and if he finds you here, I am ruined.

Col. B. Odslife, madam, thrust me any where! Can't I go out this way?

Vio. No, no, no, he comes that way.—How shall I prevent their meeting?—Here, here, step into my bed-chamber.

Col. B. Oh, the best place in the world, madam.

Vio. And be still, as you value her you love.—Don't stir till you've notice, as ever you hope to have her in your arms.

Col. B. On that condition, I'll not breathe.

[Exit COLONEL.]

Enter DON FELIX.

Fel. I wonder where this dog of a servant is, all this while—But she is at home, I find—How coldly she regards me!—You look, Violante, as if the sight of me were troublesome to you.

Vio. Can I do otherwise, when you have the assurance to approach me, after what I saw to-day?

Fel. Assurance! rather call it good nature, after what I heard last night. But such regard to honour have I, in my love to you, I cannot bear to be suspected, nor suffer you to entertain false notions of my truth, without endeavouring to convince you of my innocence; so much good nature have I more than you, Violante.—Pray give me leave to ask your woman one question—my man assures me, she was the person you saw at my lodgings.

Flora. I confess it, madam, and ask your pardon.

Vio. Impudent baggage!—not to undeceive me sooner! what business could you have there?

Fel. Lissardo and she, it seems, imitate you and I.

Flora. I love to follow the example of my betters, madam.

Fel. I hope I am justified.

Vio. Since we are to part, Felix, there needs no justification.

Fel. Methinks, you talk of parting, as a thing indifferent to you. Can you forget how I have loved?

Vio. I wish I could forget my own passion, I should, with less concern, remember yours. But for Mrs. Flora——

Fel. You must forgive her.—Must did I say? I fear I have no power to impose, though the injury was done to me.

Vio. 'Tis harder to pardon an injury done to what we love, than to ourselves; but, at your request, Felix, I do forgive her. Go, watch my father, Flora, lest he should awake, and surprise us.

Flora. Yes, madam.

[*Exit.*

Fel. Dost thou, then, love me, Violante?

Vio. What need of repetition from my tongue, when every look confesses what you ask?

Fel. Oh, let no man judge of love, but those who feel it! what wondrous magic lies in one kind look! — One tender word destroys a lover's rage, and melts his fiercest passion into soft complaint. Oh, the window, Violante! wouldst thou but clear that one suspicion! —

Vio. Pr'ythee, no more of that, my Felix! a little time shall bring thee perfect satisfaction.

Fel. Well, Violante, on condition you think no more of a monastery, I'll wait with patience for this mighty secret.

Vio. Ah, Felix, love generally gets the better of religion in us women.

Enter FLORA hastily.

Flora. Oh, madam, madam, madam! my lord your father, has been in the garden, and locked the back door, and comes muttering this way into the house.

Vio. Then we are caught.—Now, Felix, we are undone.

Fel. Heavens forbid! This is most unlucky—I may conceal myself.

[*Runs to the Door, and pushes it open a little.*

Vio. If he goes in, he'll find the colonel!—No, no, Felix, that's no safe place—my father often goes thither——

Fel. Either my eye deceived me, or I saw a man within—I'll watch him close.

Flora. Oh, invention, invention!—I have it, madam—Here, I'll fetch you a disguise. [*Exit.*

Fel. She shall deal with the devil, if she conveys him out without my knowledge.

Enter FLORA, with a Riding Hood.

Flora. Here, sir, put on this.

Fel. Ay, ay, any thing to avoid Don Pedro.

[She puts it on.]

Vio. Oh, quick, quick! I shall die with apprehension.

Flora. Be sure you don't speak a word.

Fel. Not for the Indies—but I shall observe you closer than you imagine. *[Aside.]*

Ped. *[Within.]* Violante, where are you, child?

Enter DON PEDRO.

Why, how came the garden door open?—Ha! how now? who have we here?

Flora. 'Tis my mother, an't please you, sir.

[She and FELIX both courtesy.]

Ped. Your mother! by St. Andrew, she's a strapper! why, you are a dwarf to her.—How many children have you, good woman?

Flora. Oh, dear signor, she cannot hear you; she has been deaf these twenty years.

Ped. Alas, poor woman!—Why, you muffle her up as if she were blind too. Turn up her hood.

Vio. St. Antony forbid! Oh, sir, she has the dread-fullest unlucky eyes—Pray, don't look upon them; I made her keep her hood shut on purpose.—Oh! oh! oh! oh!

Ped. Eyes!—Why, what's the matter with her eyes?

Flora. My poor mother, sir, is much afflicted with the cholic; and, about two months ago, she had it grievously in her stomach, and was over-persuaded to take a dram of filthy English geneva—which immediately flew up into her head, and caused such a defluxion in her eyes, that she could never since bear the daylight.

Ped. Say you so?—Poor woman!—Well, make her sit down, Violante, and give her a glass of wine.

Vio. Let her daughter give her a glass below, sir:—For my part, she has frightened me so I shan't be myself these two hours—I am sure her eyes are evil eyes.

Ped. Well, well, do so.—Evil eyes! there are no evil eyes, child.

Flora. Come along, mother— [Speaks loud.

Ped. Take care how you go down.

[Exeunt FELIX and FLORA.

Vio. I'm glad he's gone. [Aside.

Ped. Hast thou heard the news, Violante?

Vio. What news, sir?

Ped. Why, Vasquez tells me that Don Lopez's daughter, Isabella, is run away from her father: that lord has very ill fortune with his children.—Well, I'm glad my daughter has no inclination to mankind, that my house is plagued with no suitors. [Aside.

Vio. This is the first word ever I heard of it: I pity her frailty——

Ped. Well said, Violante.—Next week I intend thy happiness shall begin.

Enter FLORA.

Vio. I don't intend to stay so long, thank you, papa. [Aside.

Ped. My Lady Abbess writes word she longs to see thee, and has provided every thing in order for thy reception.—Thou wilt lead a happy life, my girl—fifty times before that of matrimony—where an extravagant coxcomb might make a beggar of thee, or an illnatured surly dog break thy heart.

Flora. Break her heart! she had as good have her bones broke, as to be a nun; I am sure, I had rather of the two. You are wondrous kind, sir: but if I had such a father, I know what I would do.

Ped. Why, what would you do, minx, ha?

Flora. I would tell him I had as good a right and title to the law of nature, and the end of the creation, as he had.

Ped. You would, mistress! who the devil doubts it?—A good assurance is a chambermaid's coat of arms, and lying and contriving the supporters.—Your inclinations are on tiptoe, it seems.—If I were your father, housewife, I'd have a penance enjoined you so strict, that you should not be able to turn you in your bed for a month.—You are enough to spoil your lady, housewife, if she had not abundance of devotion.

Vio. Fie, Flora! are you not ashamed to talk thus to my father?—You said yesterday you would be glad to go with me into the monastery.

Flora. Did I? I told a great lie, then.

Ped. She go with thee! no, no, she's enough to debauch the whole convent.—Well, child, remember what I said to thee: next week——

Vio. Ay, and what I am to do this, too. [*Aside.*]—I am all obedient, sir; I care not how soon I change my condition.

Flora. But little does he know what change she means. [*Aside.*]

Ped. Well, child, I am going into the country for two or three days, to settle some affairs with thy uncle; and when I return, we'll proceed for thy happiness, child.—Good b'ye, Violante; take care of thyself. [*Exeunt DON PEDRO and VIOLANTE.*]

Flora. So, now for the colonel.—Hist, hist, Colonel!

Enter COLONEL BRITON.

Col. B. Is the coast clear?

Flora. Yes, if you can climb; for you must get

over the wash-house, and jump from the garden-wall into the street.

Col. B. Nay, nay, I don't value my neck, if my incognita answers but thy lady's promise.

[*Exeunt COLONEL BRITON and FLORA.*]

Enter DON FELIX.

Fel. I have lain perdue under the stairs till I watched the old man out. [*VIOLANTE opens the Door.*] 'Sdeath! I am prevented. [*FELIX retires.*]

Enter DONNA VIOLANTE.

Vio. Now to set my prisoner at liberty. [*Goes to the Door, where the COLONEL is hid.*] Sir! sir! you may appear.

Enter DON FELIX, following her.

Fel. May he so, madam? I had cause for my suspicion, I find. Treacherous woman!

Vio. Ha! Felix here! Nay, then all is discovered!

Fel. [*Draws.*] Villain! whoever thou art, come forth, I charge thee, and take the reward of thy adulterous errand.

Vio. What shall I say?

Fel. A coward! Nay, then I'll fetch you out; think not to hide thyself: no, by St. Antony, an altar should not protect thee. [*Exit.*]

Vio. What shall I do? I must discover Isabella, or here will be murder.

Enter FLORA.

Flora. I have helped the colonel off clear, madam.

Vio. Sayest thou so, my girl?—Then I am armed.

Enter DON FELIX.

Fel. Where has the devil, in compliance to your sex, conveyed him from my resentment?

Vio. Him ! whom do you mean, my dear inquisitive spark ? Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha ! you will never leave these jealous whims.

Fel. Will you never cease to impose upon me ?

Vio. You impose upon yourself, my dear. Do you think I did not see you ? Yes, I did, and resolved to to put this trick upon you.

Fel. Trick !

Vio. Yes, trick. I knew you'd take the hint, and soon relapse into your wonted error. How easily your jealousy is fired ! I shall have a blessed life with you !

Fel. Was there nothing in it, then, but only to try me ?

Vio. Won't you believe your eyes ?

Fel. My eyes ! No, nor my ears, nor any of my senses ; for they have all deceived me. Well, I am convinced that faith is as necessary in love as in religion ; for the moment a man lets a woman know her conquest, he resigns his senses, and sees nothing but what she'd have him.

Vio. And as soon as that man finds his love returned, she becomes as arrant a slave as if she had already said after the priest.

Fel. The priest, Violante, would dissipate those fears which cause these quarrels. When wilt thou make me happy ?

Vio. To-morrow I will tell thee : my father is gone for two or three days to my uncle's ; we have time enough to finish our affairs.—But, pr'ythee, leave me now, lest some accident should bring my father.

Fel. To-morrow, then——

Fly swift, ye hours, and bring to-morrow on !——
But must I leave you now, my Violante ?

Vio. You must, my Felix.—We soon shall meet to part no more !

Fel. Oh, rapturous sounds ! charming woman !

Thy words and looks have fill'd my heart
With joy, and left no room for jealousy.
Do thou, like me, each doubt and fear remove,
And all to come be confidence and love. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

FREDERICK's *House.**Enter* DON FELIX *and* FREDERICK.

Fel. This hour has been propitious ; I am reconciled to Violante, and you assure me Antonio is out of danger.

Fred. Your satisfaction is doubly mine.

Enter LISSARDO.

Fel. What haste you made, sirrah, to bring me word if Violante went home !

Liss. I can give you very good reasons for my stay, sir.—Yes, sir, she went home.

Fred. Oh, your master knows that, for he has been there himself, Lissardo.

Liss. Sir, may I beg the favour of your ear ?

Fel. What have you to say ?

[*Whispers, and* FELIX *seems uneasy.*]

Fred. Ha! Felix changes colour at Lissardo's news! What can it be?

Fel. A Scots footman, that belongs to Colonel Briton, an acquaintance of Frederick's, say you? The devil! If she be false, by Heaven I'll trace her. Pr'ythee, Frederick, do you know one Colonel Briton, a Scotsman?

Fred. Yes; why do you ask me?

Fel. Nay, no great matter; but my man tells me that he has had some little differences with a servant of his, that's all.

Fred. He is a good, harmless, innocent fellow: I am sorry for it. The colonel lodges in my house; I knew him formerly in England, and met him here by accident last night, and gave him an invitation home. He is a gentleman of good estate, besides his commission; of excellent principles, and strict honour, I assure you.

Fel. Is he a man of intrigue?

Fred. Like other men, I suppose. Here he comes.—

Enter COLONEL BRITON.

Colonel, I began to think I had lost you.

Col. B. And not without some reason, if you knew all.

Fel. There's no danger of a fine gentleman's being lost in this town, sir.

Col. B. That compliment don't belong to me, sir; but, I assure you, I have been very near being run away with.

Fred. Who attempted it?

Col. B. 'Faith, I know not—only that she is a charming woman; I mean, as much as I saw of her.

Fel. My heart swells with apprehension—some accidental rencounter.—

Fred. A tavern, I suppose, adjusted the matter.

Col. B. A tavern! no, no, sir; she is above that

rank, I assure you : this nymph sleeps in a velvet bed, and lodgings every way agreeable.

Fel. Ha ! a velvet bed !—I thought you said but now, sir, you knew her not.

Col. B. No more I do, sir.

Fel. How came you then so well acquainted with her bed ?

Fred. Ay, ay ; come, come, unfold.

Col. B. Why, then, you must know, gentlemen, that I was conveyed to her lodgings by one of Cupid's emissaries, called a chambermaid, in a chair, through fifty blind alleys, who, by the help of a key, let me into a garden.

Fel. A garden ! this must be Violante's garden !

[*Aside.*

Col. B. From thence conducted me into a spacious room, then dropped me a courtesy, told me her lady would wait on me presently ; so, without unveiling, modestly withdrew.

Fel. Damn her modesty ! this was Flora. [*Aside.*

Fred. Well, how then, Colonel ?

Col. B. Then, sir, immediately from another door, issued forth a lady, armed at both eyes, from whence such showers of darts fell round me, that, had I not been covered with the shield of another beauty, I had infallibly fallen a martyr to her charms ; for you must know, I just saw her eyes—Eyes, did I say ? no, no, hold ; I saw but one eye, though I suppose it had a fellow equally killing.

Fel. But how came you to see her bed, sir ?——
'Sdeath ! this expectation gives a thousand racks.

[*Aside.*

Col. B. Why, upon her maid's giving notice her father was coming, she thrust me into the bed-chamber.

Fel. Upon her father's coming !

Col. B. Ay, so she said ; but, putting my ear to the keyhole of the door, I found it was another lover.

Fel. Confound the jilt! 'twas she without dispute!
[*Aside.*

Fred. Ah, poor Colonel! Ha! ha! ha!

Col. B. I discovered they had had a quarrel; but whether they were reconciled or not I can't tell, for the second alarm brought the father in good earnest, and had like to have made the gentleman and I acquainted, but she found some other stratagem to convey him out.

Fel. Contagion seize her, and make her body ugly as her soul! There is nothing left to doubt of now—'Tis plain 'twas she.—Sure he knows me, and takes this method to insult me. 'Sdeath! I cannot bear it.
[*Aside.*

Fred. So, when she had despatched her old lover, she paid you a visit in her bed-chamber; ha! Colonel?

Col. B. No, pox take the impertinent puppy! he spoiled my diversion; I saw her no more.

Fel. Very fine! Give me patience, Heaven, or I shall burst with rage.
[*Aside.*

Fred. That was hard.

Col. B. Nay, what was worse——But, sir, dear sir, do hearken to this: [*To FELIX.*] The nymph, that introduced me, conveyed me out again, over the top of a high wall, where I ran the danger of having my neck broke, for the father, it seems, had locked the door by which I entered.

Fel. That way I missed him—Damn her invention!—[*Aside.*]—Pray, Colonel—Ha! ha! ha! it's very pleasant, ha! ha!—Was this the same lady you met upon the Terriero de Passa this morning?

Col. B. 'Faith, I can't tell, sir; I had a design to know who that lady was, but my dog of a footman, whom I had ordered to watch her home, fell fast asleep.—I gave him a good beating for his neglect, and I have never seen the rascal since.

Fred. Here he comes.

Enter GIBBY.

Col. B. Where have you been, sirrah?

Gibby. Troth, Ise been seeking ye, an like yer honour, these twa hours and mair. I bring ye glad teedings, sir.

Col. B. What, have you found the lady?

Gibby. Gude faith ha I, sir—and she's called Donna Violante, and her parent Don Pedro de Mendosa, and gin ye will gang wi'me, an like yer honour, Ise mak ye ken the hoose right weel.

Fel. Oh, torture! torture! [*Aside.*

Col. B. Ha! Violante! that's the lady's name of the house where my incognita is: sure it could not be her; at least, it was not the same house, I'm confident. [*Aside.*

Fred. Violante! 'tis false; I would not have you credit him, Colonel.

Gibby. The deel burst my bladder, sir, gin I lee.

Fel. Sirrah, I say you do lie, and I'll make you eat it, you dog; [*Kicks him.*] and if your master will justify you——

Col. B. Not I 'faith, sir—I answer for nobody's lies but my own: if you please, kick him again.

Gibby. But gin he does Ise na tak it, sir, gin he was a thousand Spaniards. [*Walks about in a Passion.*

Col. B. I owed you a beating, sirrah, and I'm obliged to this gentleman for taking the trouble off my hands; therefore, say no more; d'ye hear, sir?

[*Aside to GIBBY.*

Gibby. Troth de I, sir, and feel te. [*GIBBY retires.*

Fred. This must be a mistake, Colonel, for I know Violante perfectly well, and I am certain she would not meet you upon the Terriero de Passa.

Col. B. Don't be too positive, Frederick: now I have some reasons to believe it was that very lady.

Fel. You'd very much oblige me, sir, if you'd let me know these reasons.

Col. B. Sir!

Fel. Sir, I say, I have a right to inquire into these reasons you speak of.

Col. B. Ha! ha! really, sir, I cannot conceive how you, or any man, can have a right to inquire into my thoughts.

Fel. Sir, I have a right to every thing that relates to Violante—and he that traduces her fame, and refuses to give his reasons for it, is a villain. [*Draws.*]

Col. B. What the devil have I been doing! Now, blisters on my tongue by dozens! [*Aside.*]

Fred. Pr'ythee, Felix, don't quarrel till you know for what: this is all a mistake; I'm positive.

Col. B. Lookye, sir, that I dare draw my sword, I think, will admit of no dispute.—But though fighting's my trade, I'm not in love with it, and think it more honourable to decline this business than pursue it. This may be a mistake; however, I'll give you my honour never to have any affair, directly, or indirectly, with Violante, provided she is your Violante; but if there should happen to be another of her name, I hope you would not engross all the Violantes in the kingdom.

Fel. Your vanity has given me sufficient reasons to believe I'm not mistaken. I'll not be imposed upon, sir.

Col. B. Nor I be bullied, sir.

Fel. Bullied! 'Sdeath! such another word, and I'll nail thee to the wall.

Col. B. Are you sure of that, Spaniard? [*Draws.*]

Gibby. [*Draws.*] Say na mair, mon. O' my saul, here's twa to twa. Dinna fear, sir; Gibby stonds by ye for the honour of Scotland. [*Vapours about.*]

Fred. By St. Antony, you shan't fight [*Interposes.*] on bare suspicion: be certain of the injury, and then——

Fel. That I will this moment; and then, sir—I hope you are to be found——

Col. B. Whenever you please, sir. [*Exit FELIX.*]

Gibby. 'Sbleed, sir! there ne'er was a Scotsman yet that sham'd to show his face. [*Strutting about.*]

Fred. So quarrels spring up like mushrooms, in a minute. Violante and he were but just reconciled, and you have furnished him with fresh matter for falling out again; and I am certain, Colonel, Gibby is in the wrong.

Gibby. Gin I be, sir, the mon that tald me leed, and gin he did, the deel be my landlord, and hell my winter-quarters, and a rape my winding-sheet, gin I dee not lick him as lang as I can haud a stick in my hond, now see ye.

Col. B. I am sorry for what I have said, for the lady's sake: but who could divine that she was his mistress? Pr'ythee, who is this warm spark?

Fred. He is the son of one of our grandees, named Don Lopez de Pimentello, a very honest gentleman, but something passionate in what relates to his love. He is an only son, which may, perhaps, be one reason for indulging his passion.

Col. B. When parents have but one child, they either make a madman or a fool of him.

Fred. He is not the only child, he has a sister; but I think, through the severity of his father, who would have married her against her inclination, she has made her escape, and, notwithstanding he has offered five hundred pounds, he can get no tidings of her.

Col. B. Ha! how long has she been missing?

Fred. Nay, but since last night, it seems.

Col. B. Last night! the very time! How went she?

Fred. Nobody can tell; they conjecture, through the window.

Col. B. I'm transported! this must be the lady I caught. What sort of a woman is she?

Fred. Middle-sized, a lovely brown, a fine pouting

lip, eyes that roll and languish, and seem to speak the exquisite pleasure her arms could give.

Col. B. Oh! I am fired with this description—'tis the very she.—What's her name?

Fred. Isabella.—You are transported, Colonel.

Col. B. I have a natural tendency in me to the flesh, thou know'st, and who can hear of charms so exquisite, and yet remain unmoved?—Oh, how I long for the appointed hour! I'll to the Terriero de Passa, and wait my happiness: if she fails to meet me, I'll once more attempt to find her at Violante's, in spite of her brother's jealousy. [*Aside.*—Dear Frederick, I beg your pardon! but I had forgot I was to meet a gentleman upon business at five: I'll endeavour to despatch him, and wait on you again as soon as possible.

Fred. Your humble servant, Colonel. [*Exit.*

Col. B. Gibby, I have no business with you at present. [*Exit.*

Gibby. That's weel.—Now will I gang and seek this loon, and gar him gang with me to Don Pedro's hoose.—Gin he'll no gang of himself, Ise gar him gang by the lug, sir. Godswarbit! Gibby hates a leer. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

VIOLANTE'S Lodging.

Enter VIOLANTE and ISABELLA.

Isab. The hour draws on, Violante, and now my heart begins to fail me; but I resolve to venture, for all that.

Vio. What, does your courage sink, Isabella?

Isab. Only the force of resolution a little retreated, but I'll rally it again, for all that.

Enter FLORA.

Flora. Don Felix is coming up, madam.

Isab. My brother! which way shall I get out?—Despatch him as soon as you can, dear Violante.

[Exit into the Closet.]

Vio. I will.

Enter FELIX, in a surly Humour.

Felix, what brings you back so soon? did I not say to-morrow?

Fel. My passion chokes me; I cannot speak—Oh, I shall burst! *[Aside.—Throws himself into a Chair.]*

Vio. Bless me! are you not well, my Felix?

Fel. Yes—No—I don't know what I am.

Vio. Heyday! what's the matter now? another jealous whim!

Fel. With what an air she carries it!—I sweat at her impudence! *[Aside.]*

Vio. If I were in your place, Felix, I'd chuse to stay at home when these fits of spleen are upon me, and not trouble such persons as are not obliged to bear with them. *[Here he affects to be careless of her.]*

Fel. I am very sensible, madam, of what you mean: I disturb you, no doubt; but were I in a better humour, I should not incommode you less: I am too well convinced you could easily dispense with my visit.

Vio. When you behave yourself as you ought to do, no company so welcome—but when you reserve me for your ill nature, I waive your merit, and consider what's due to myself.—And I must be free to tell you, Felix, that these humours of yours will abate, if not absolutely destroy, the very principles of love.

Fel. *[Rising.]* And I must be so free to tell you,

madam, that since you have made such ill returns to the respect that I have paid you, all you do shall be indifferent to me for the future; and you shall find me abandon your empire with so little difficulty, that I'll convince the world your chains are not so hard to break as your vanity would tempt you to believe.—I cannot brook the provocation you give,

Vio. This is not to be borne—insolent! you abandon! you! whom I have so often forbade ever to see me more! Have you not fallen at my feet? implored my favour and forgiveness? did you not trembling wait, and wish, and sigh, and swear, yourself into my heart? Ungrateful man! if my chains are so easily broke as you pretend, then you are the silliest coxcomb living you did not break them long ago; and I must think him capable of brooking any thing, on whom such usage could make no impression.

Fel. I always believed, madam, my weakness was the greatest addition to your power; you would be less imperious had my inclination been less forward to oblige you.—You have indeed forbade me your sight, but your vanity even then assured you I would return, and I was fool enough to feed your pride.—Your eyes, with all their boasted charms, have acquired the greatest glory in conquering me—and the brightest passage of your life is wounding this heart with such arms as pierce but few persons of my rank.

[Walks about.]

Vio. Matchless arrogance! True, sir, I should have kept measures better with you, if the conquest had been worth preserving; but we easily hazard what gives us no pain to lose.—As for my eyes, you are mistaken if you think they have vanquished none but you: there are men above your boasted rank who have confessed their power, when their misfortune in pleasing you made them obtain such a disgraceful victory.

Fel. Yes, madam, I am no stranger to your victories.

Vio. And what you call the brightest passage of my life is not the least glorious part of yours.

Fel. Ha! ha! don't put yourself in a passion, madam; for, I assure you, after this day, I shall give you no trouble.—You may meet your sparks on the Terriero de Passa at four in the morning, without the least regard to me—for, when I quit your chamber, the world shan't bring me back.

Vio. I am so well pleased with your resolution, I don't care how soon you take your leave. But what you mean by the Terriero de Passa at four in the morning, I can't guess.

Fel. No, no, no!—not you.—You was not upon the Terriero de Passa at four this morning!

Vio. No, I was not; but if I were, I hope I may walk where I please, and at what hour I please, without asking your leave?

Fel. Oh, doubtless, madam! and you might meet Colonel Briton there, and afterwards send your emissary to fetch him to your house—and, upon your father's coming in, thrust him into your bed-chamber—without asking my leave. 'Tis no business of mine, if you are exposed among all the footmen in town—nay, if they ballad you, and cry you about at a half-penny apiece—they may without my leave!

Vio. Audacious!—don't provoke me—don't: my reputation is not to be sported with [*Going up to him.*] at this rate—no, sir, it is not. [*Bursts into Tears.*]—Inhuman Felix!—Oh, Isabella! what a train of ills thou hast brought on me! [*Aside.*]

Fel. Ha! I cannot bear to see her weep—a woman's tears are far more fatal than our swords.—[*Aside.*] Oh, Violante!—'Sdeath! what a dog am I! Now have I no power to stir.—Dost not thou know such a person as Colonel Briton? Pr'ythee, tell me—didst not thou meet him at four this morning upon the Terriero de Passa?

Vio. Were it not to clear my fame, I would not answer thee, thou black ingrate!—but I cannot bear to be reproached with what I even blush to think of, much less to act. By Heaven! I have not seen the Terriero de Passa this day.

Fel. Did not a Scotch footman attack you in the street neither, Violante?

Vio. Yes—but he mistook me for another—or he was drunk, I know not which.

Fel. And do not you know this Scotch colonel?

Vio. Pray ask me no more questions: this night shall clear my reputation, and leave you without excuse for your base suspicions. More than this I shall not satisfy you—therefore, pray leave me.

Fel. Didst thou ever love me, Violante?

Vio. I'll answer nothing—You was in haste to begone, just now; I should be very well pleased to be alone, sir. *[She sits down, and turns aside.]*

Fel. I shall not interrupt your contemplation.—Stubborn to the last! *[Aside.]*

Vio. Did ever woman involve herself as I have done!

Fel. Now would I give one of my eyes to be friends with her, for something whispers to my soul, she is not guilty.—*[He pauses, then pulls a Chair, and sits by her at a little distance, looking at her some time without speaking, then draws a little nearer to her.]* Give me your hand at parting, however, Violante, won't you—*[He lays his Hand upon her Knee several times.]* won't you—won't you—won't you?

Vio. *[Half regarding him.]* Won't I do what?

Fel. You know what I would have, Violante.—Oh, my heart!

Vio. *[Smiling.]* I thought my chains were easily broke. *[Lays her Hand into his.]*

Fel. *[Draws his Chair close to her, and kisses her Hand in a rapture.]* Too well thou knowest thy

strength.—Oh, my charming angel! my heart is all thy own. Forgive my hasty passion—'tis the transport of a love sincere. Oh, Violante! Violante!

Pedro. [*Within.*] Bid Sancho get a new wheel to my chariot presently.

Vio. Bless me, my father returned! What shall we do now, Felix? We are ruined past redemption.

Fel. No, no, no, my love, I can leap from the closet window. [*Runs to the Door where ISABELLA is, who claps to the Door, and bolts it withinside.*] Confusion! somebody bolts the door withinside.—Oh, Violante! hast thou again sacrificed me to my rival?
[*Draws.*

Vio. By Heaven, thou hast no rival in my heart!—Let that suffice.—Nay, sure you will not let my father find you here—Distraction!

Fel. Indeed but I shall—unless you command this door to be opened, and that way conceal me from his sight. [*He struggles with her to come at the Door.*

Vio. Hear me, Felix—though I were sure the refusing what you ask would separate us for ever, by all that's powerful you shall not enter here. Either you do love me, or you do not: convince me by your obedience.

Fel. That's not the matter in debate—I will know who is in this closet, let the consequence be what it will. Nay, nay, you strive in vain—I will go in.

Vio. You shall not go——

Fel. I will go in.

Enter DON PEDRO.

Ped. Heyday! what's here to do? I will go in, and you shan't go in—and I will go in.—Why, who are you, sir?

Fel. 'Sdeath! what shall I say now?

Ped. Don Felix!—Pray, what's your business in my house? ha, sir?

Vio. Oh, sir! what miracle returned you home so

soon? some angel 'twas that brought my father back, to succour the distressed.—This ruffian, he—I cannot call him gentleman—has committed such an uncommon rudeness, as the most profligate wretch would be ashamed to own.

Fel. What does she mean? *[Aside.*

Vio. As I was at my devotion in my closet, I heard a loud knocking at my door, mixed with a woman's voice, which seemed to imply she was in danger.—I flew to the door with the utmost speed, where a lady, veiled, rushed in upon me; who, falling on her knees, begged my protection from a gentleman who, she said, pursued her. I took compassion on her tears, and locked her into this closet; but in the surprise, having left open the door, this very person, whom you see with his sword drawn, ran in, protesting, if I did not give her up to his revenge, he'd force the door.

Fel. What the devil does she mean to do? hang me? *[Aside.*

Vio. I strove with him till I was out of breath, and had you not come as you did, he must have entered. But he's in drink, I suppose; or he could not have been guilty of such an indecorum.

[Leering at FELIX.

Ped. I'm amazed!

Fel. The devil never failed a woman at a pinch:—what a tale has she formed in a minute!—In drink, quotha! a good hint: I'll lay hold on't to bring myself off. *[Aside.*

Ped. Fie, Don Felix!—no sooner rid of one broil, but you are commencing another!—To assault a lady with a naked sword, derogates much from the character of a gentleman, I assure you.

Fel. *[Counterfeits drunkenness.]* Who, I assault a lady—upon honour the lady assaulted me, sir, and would have seized this body politic on the king's highway—Let her come out, and deny it if she

can.—Pray, sir, command the door to be opened; and let her prove me a liar, if she knows how.

Ped. Ay, ay!—open the door, Violante, and let the lady come out.—Come, I warrant thee he shan't hurt her!

Fel. No, no, I won't hurt the dear creature.—Now, now, which way will you come off, now? [*Aside.*

Vio. [*Unlocks the Door.*] Come forth, madam!—None shall dare to touch your veil—I'll convey you out with safety, or lose my life.—I hope she understands me! [*Aside.*

Enter ISABELLA veiled, and crosses the Stage.

Isab. Excellent girl! [*Exit.*

Fel. The devil!—a woman!—I'll see if she be really so. [*Aside.*

Vio. [*To FELIX.*] Get clear of my father, and follow me to the Terriero de Passa, where all mistakes shall be rectified.

[*Exit, with ISABELLA.*—DON FELIX offers to follow her.

Ped. [*Drawing his Sword.*] Not a step, sir, till the lady is past your recovery; I never suffer the laws of hospitality to be violated in my house, sir.—I'll keep Don Felix here, till you see her safe out, Violante.—Come, sir, you and I will take a pipe and a bottle together.

Fel. Damn your pipe, and damn your bottle!—I hate drinking and smoking, and how will you help yourself, old whiskers?

Ped. As to smoking or drinking, you have your liberty; but you shall stay, sir!

Fel. But I won't stay, sir—for I don't like your company; besides, I have the best reasons in the world for my not staying!

Ped. Ay, what's that?

Fel. Why, I am going to be married—and so good b'ye.

Ped. To be married!—it can't be. Why, you are drunk, Felix!

Fel. Drunk! ay, to be sure; you don't think I'd go to be married if I were sober—but, drunk or sober, I am going to be married—and if you won't believe me, to convince you, I'll show you the contract, old gentleman.

Ped. Ay, do; come, let's see this contract, then.

Fel. Yes, yes—I'll show you the contract—I'll show you the contract——Here, sir—here's the contract.

[*Draws a Pistol.*]

Ped. [*Starting.*] Well, well, I'm convinced—go, go—pray go and be married, sir.

Fel. Yes, yes—I'll go—I'll go and be married; but shan't we take a bottle first?

Ped. No, no—pray, dear sir, go and be married.

Fel. Very well—very well! [*Going.*] but I insist upon your taking one glass, though.

Ped. No, not now—some other time—consider, the lady waits.

Fel. What a cross old fool!—first he will, and then he won't—and then he will, and then he won't!

[*Exit.*]

Enter SANCHO.

San. Don Lopez de Pimentello is in the next room, signor.

Ped. What the devil does he want? he is not going to be married, too!—Bring him up—he's in pursuit of his son, I suppose!

[*Exit* SANCHO.]

Enter DON LOPEZ.

Lop. I am glad to find you at home, Don Pedro; I was told that you was going into the country this afternoon.

Ped. That might be, my lord; but I had the misfortune to break the wheel of my chariot, which

obliged me to return.—What is your pleasure with me, my lord?

Lop. I am informed that my daughter is in your house.

Ped. That's more than I know, my lord; but here was your son, just now, as drunk as an emperor.

Lop. My son drunk!—I never saw him in drink in my life.—Where is he, pray, sir?

Ped. Gone to be married.

Lop. Married!—to whom?—I don't know, that he courted any body!

Ped. Nay, I know nothing of that—but I'm sure he showed me the contract.—Within, there!—

Enter SANCHO.

Bid my daughter come hither; she'll tell you another story, my lord.

San. She's gone out in a chair, sir.

Ped. Out in a chair!—What do you mean, sir?

San. As I say, sir;—and your daughter, Donna Isabella, went in another just before her.

Lop. Isabella!

San. And Don Felix followed in another;—I overheard them all bid the chair go to the Terriero de Passa. *[Exit.*

Ped. Ha! what business has my daughter there? I am confounded, and know not what to think.—Within there! *[Exit.*

Lop. My heart misgives me plaguily.—Call me an alguazil—I'll pursue them straight. *[Exit.*

SCENE III.

The Street before DON PEDRO's House.

Enter LISSARDO.

Liss. I wish I could see Flora—methinks I have an hankering kindness after the slut—we must be reconciled.

Enter GIBBY.

Gibby. Aw my sal, sir, but Ise blithe to find yee here now.

Liss. Ha, brother ! give me thy hand, boy.

Gibby. No se fast, se ye me—brether me ne brethers ; I scorn a leer as muckle as a thiefe, se ye now, and ye must gang intul this house with me, and justify to Donna Violante's face, that she was the lady that ganged in here this morn, se ye me, or the deel ha my sal, sir, but ye and I shall be twa folks.

Liss. Justify it to Donna Violante's face, quotha ! For what ?—Sure you don't know what you say !

Gibby. Troth de I, sir, as weel as yee de ; therefore come along, and make no mair words about it.

Liss. Why, what the devil do you mean ?—Don't you consider you are in Portugal ?—Is the fellow mad ?

Gibby. Fellow ! Ise none of yer fellow, sir ; and gin the place were hell, I'd gar ye do me justice.—*[LISSARDO going.]* Nay, the deel a feet ye gang.

[Lays hold of him, and knocks.]

Liss. Ha ! Don Pedro himself ! I wish I were fairly off. . . . *[Aside.]*

Enter DON PEDRO.

Ped. How now ? What makes you knock so loud ?

Gibby. Gin this be Don Pedro's house, sir, I would speak with Donna Violante, his daughter.

Ped. Ha ! what is it you want with my daughter, pray ?

Gibby. An she be your daughter, and lik your honour, command her to come out, and answer for herself now, and either justifie or disprove what this chiel told me this morn.

Ped. Why, what did he tell you, ha ?

Gibby. By my sal, sir, Ise tell you aw the truth.—My master got a pratty lady upon the how de call't—Passa—here at five this morn, and he gar me watch her heam—and in troth I lodged her here ; and meeting this ill-favoured thiefe, se ye me, I speered wha she was—and he tald me her name was Donna Violante, Don Pedro de Mendosa's daughter.

Ped. Ha ! my daughter with a man, abroad at five in the morning ! Death, hell, and furies ! By Saint Antony, I'm undone.

Gibby. Wounds, sir ! ye put yer saint intul bonny company.

Ped. Who is your master, you dog, you ?

Gibby. You dog, you ! 'Sblead, sir ! don't call names—I won't tell you who my master is, se ye me, now.

Ped. And who are you, rascal, that know my daughter so well ? ha !

[*Holds up his Cane.*

Liss. What shall I say, to make him give this Scotch dog a good beating ? [*Aside.*] I know your daughter, signor ! Not I ; I never saw your daughter in all my life !

Gibby. [*Knocks him down with his Fist.*] Deel ha my sal, sar, gin ye get no your carich for that lie, now.

Ped. What, ho! where are all my servants?

Enter DON FELIX, DONNA VIOLANTE, COLONEL BRITON, and DONNA ISABELLA.

Raise the house in pursuit of my daughter!

Col. B. Heyday! what's here to do?

Gibby. This is the loonlike tik, an lik your honour, that sent me heam with a lee this morn.

Col. B. Come, come, 'tis all well, Gibby; let him rise.

Fel. This is a day of jubilee, Lissardo; no quarrelling with him this day.

Liss. A pox take his fists!—Egad, these Britons are but a word and a blow.

Enter DON LOPEZ.

Lop. So, have I found you, daughter? Then you have not hanged yourself yet, I see!

Col. B. But she is married, my lord!

Lop. Married! Zounds! to whom?

Col. B. Even to your humble servant, my lord.—If you please to give us your blessing. *[Kneels.]*

Lop. Why, harkye, mistress, are you really married?

Isab. Really so, my lord.

Lop. And who are you, sir?

Col. B. An honest North Briton by birth, and a colonel by commission, my lord.

Lop. An heretic! the devil!

[Holding up his Hands.]

Ped. She has played you a slippery trick, indeed, my lord.—Well, my girl, thou hast been to see thy friend married—next week thou shalt have a better husband, my dear. *[To VIOLANTE.]*

Fel. Next week is a little too soon, sir; I hope to live longer than that.

Ped. What do you mean, sir? You have not made a rib of my daughter too, have you?

Vio. Indeed but he has, sir: I know not how, but he took me in an unguarded minute—when my thoughts were not over strong for a nunnery, father.

Lop. Your daughter has played you a slippery trick too, signor.

Ped. But your son shall never be the better for't, my lord; her twenty thousand pounds was left on certain conditions, and I'll not part with a shilling.

Lop. But we have a certain thing, called law, shall make you do justice, sir.

Ped. Well, we'll try that—my lord, much good may it do you with your daughter-in-law. *[Exit.*

Lop. I wish you much joy of your rib! *[Exit.*

Enter FREDERICK.

Fel. Frederick, welcome!—I sent for thee to be partaker of my happiness, and pray give me leave to introduce you to the cause of it.

Fred. Your messenger has told me all, and I sincerely share in all your happiness.

Col. B. To the right about, Frederick—wish thy friend joy.

Fred. I do with all my soul—and, madam, I congratulate your deliverance.—Your suspicions are cleared now, I hope, Felix?

Fel. They are, and I heartily ask the colonel pardon, and wish him happy with my sister; for love has taught me to know that every man's happiness consists in chusing for himself.

Liss. After that rule I fix here. *[To FLORA.*

Flora. That's your mistake; I prefer my lady's service, and turn you over to her that pleaded right and title to you to-day.

Liss. Chuse, proud fool! I shan't ask you twice.

Gibby. What say ye now, lass—will ye ge yer hond to poor Gibby?—Will you dance the reel of Bogie with me?

Inis. That I may not leave my lady, I take you at your word ; and though our wooing has been short, I'll, by her example, love you dearly.

Fel. Now, my Violante, I shall proclaim thy virtues to the world.

Let us no more thy sex's conduct blame,
Since thou'rt a proof, to their eternal fame,
That man has no advantage, but the name.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

THE END.

A BOLD STROKE FOR A WIFE;

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

BY MRS. CENTLIVRE.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

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REMARKS.

Susannah Centlivre, the writer of this play, says of it, in her Dedication to the Duke of Wharton:—

“ All that I have to assert in favour of this piece is, that the plot is entirely new, and the incidents wholly owing to my own invention; not borrowed from our own, or translated from the works of any foreign poet; so that they have at least the charm of novelty to recommend them.”

It would at present be more honourable to the authoress, that a reader should believe she had inconsiderately adopted the scenes of another, in the following play, than invented them herself. Still, in that supposition, much blame would attach to her taste and morality for the choice she had made in the adoption.

It is deeply to be lamented, that, at the time the most ingenious and witty of the English dramatists lived, there was no restraint, as at this period, upon the immorality of the stage. Plays would have come down to the present age, under such restrictions, less brilliant in humour and repartee, with fewer eulogiums from the admirers of wit; but with fewer reproaches from the wise and the good, upon the evil tendency of the dramatic art.

The happy effect of the moral dramas of this æra, in impressing those persons with just sentiments who attend no other place of instruction but a theatre, has not yet erased from the mind of the prejudiced former ill consequences, from former plays.

Mrs. Centlivre, as a woman, falls more particularly under censure than her cotemporary writers :—though her temptations, to please the degraded taste of the public, were certainly more vehement than those of the authors, who wrote at that time ; for they were men whose fortunes were not wholly dependent on their mental exertions ; yet, the virtue of fortitude is expected from a female, when delicacy is the object which tries it ; and the authoress of this comedy should have laid down her pen, and taken, in exchange, the meanest implement of labour, rather than have imitated the licentious example given her by the renowned poets of those days.

That Mrs. Centlivre was unfortunate from her birth, an orphan in her tender years, and a friendless wanderer at that age when most she required protection, has been already related in the sketch of her life affixed to her comedy of the “ Busy Body :” the difficulties under which she had to struggle for subsistence, may plead some excuse to the indulgent, for her having in this one production, out of those which now keep a place upon the stage, applied to that disgraceful support of her Muse, to which her own sex of those times did not blush to attend as auditors. Nor can her offence be treated with excessive rigour in reference to the present time by those, who consider, that this very play of “ A bold Stroke for a Wife,” is now frequently performed to an elegant, yet applauding audience.

The authoress has displayed high dramatic talents in the conception and execution of the various characters and incidents with which this play abounds.

Herein the genius of Mrs. Centlivre consisted—the dialogue of her dramas might be given by a common writer, but her fable and events are proofs of a very extraordinary capacity.

But, in this comedy, however fertile her imagination has been in forming a multiplicity of occurrences, and diversifying the whole exhibition by variety of character, probability is so often violated, that the effect, though powerful, is that of farce, and not genuine comedy.

To admire Mrs. Centlivre as her talents deserve, it is necessary to read, or to see, her “Wonder, or a Woman keeps a Secret.”

The following comedy was brought upon the stage in 1717, when the authoress was in her thirty-eighth year. She enjoyed at that time the intimacy and friendship of Farquhar, Rowe, Steele, and other men of letters, to whom her conversation was highly delightful; as it is said, she had more wit and repartee in herself, than she ever gave to her dramatic characters.

Congreve, who lived in her time, is an exception among the literary men who courted her acquaintance; for he had the humility to be jealous of the favour with which her works were received by the public.

The “Bold Stroke for a Wife” is the drama on which the well known prediction of Wilkes, the celebrated comedian, was delivered, upon his hearing it read previous to its rehearsal. As the first part of that prediction failed,—so is it ardently to be hoped, did the last.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

COLONEL FAINWELL
FREEMAN
SIR PHILIP MODELOVE
OBADIAH PRIM
TRADELOVE
PERIWINKLE
SACKBUT
SIMON PURE
AMINADAB

Mr. Bannister.
Mr. Bartley.
Mr. Cherry.
Mr. Downton.
Mr. Wewitzer.
Mr. Mathews.
Mr. Palmer.
Mr. Russell.
Mr. Purser.

MRS. PRIM
ANN LOVELY
BETTY

Miss Pope.
Miss Mellon.
Miss Tidswell.

A BOLD STROKE FOR A WIFE.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

A Tavern.

COLONEL FAINWELL and FREEMAN over a Bottle

Enter SACKBUT.

Free. Mr. Sackbut, we sent for you to take a glass with us. 'Tis a maxim among the friends of the bottle, that as long as the master is in company, one may be sure of good wine.

Sack. Sir, you shall be sure to have as good wine as any I have.—Colonel, your most humble servant; you are welcome to town.

Col. I thank you, Mr. Sackbut.

Sack. I am as glad to see you as I should a hundred tun of French claret, custom free.—My service to you, sir. [*Drinks.*—You don't look so merry as you used to do; ar'n't you well, Colonel?

Free. He has got a woman in his head, Landlord; can you help him?

Sack. If 'tis in my power, I sha'n't scruple to serve my friend.

Col. 'Tis one perquisite of your calling.

Free. You know Mrs. Lovely, Mr. Sackbut?

Sack. Know her! ay, poor Nancy: I have carried her to school many a frosty morning.—Alas, if she's

the woman, I pity you, Colonel: her father, my old master, was the most whimsical out-of-the-way temper'd man I ever heard of, as you will guess by his last will and testament.—This was his only child: he died worth thirty thousand pounds, which he left to his daughter, provided she married with the consent of her guardians: but that she might be sure never to do so, he left her in the care of four men, as opposite to each other as the four elements; each has his quarterly rule, and three months in a year she is oblig'd to be subject to each of their humours, and they are pretty different, I assure you.—She is just come from Bath.

Col. 'Twas there I saw her. She visited a lady who boarded in the same house with me: I liked her person, and found an opportunity to tell her so. She replied, she had no objection to mine; but if I could not reconcile contradictions, I must not think of her; for that she was condemned to the caprice of four persons, who never yet agreed in any one thing, and she was obliged to please them all.

Sack. 'Tis most true, sir; I'll give you a short description of the men, and leave you to judge of the poor lady's condition. One is a kind of virtuoso, a silly half-witted fellow; but positive and surly, fond of every thing antique and foreign, and wears his clothes of the fashion of the last century.

Col. That must be a rare odd fellow!

Sack. Another is a 'Change broker; a fellow that will out lye the devil for the advantage of stock, and cheat his father, that got him, in a bargain: he is a great stickler for trade, and hates every man that wears a sword.

Free. He is a great admirer of the Dutch management, and swears they understand trade better than any nation under the sun.

Sack. The third is an old beau, that has May in his fancy and dress, but December in his face and his

heels: He admires all the new fashions, and those must be French; loves operas, balls, masquerades, and is always the most tawdry of the whole company on a birth day.

Col. These are pretty opposite to one another, truly;—and the fourth, what is he, Landlord?

Sack. A very rigid quaker, whose quarter began this day.—I saw Mrs. Lovely go in, not above two hours ago,—Sir Philip set her down. What think you now, Colonel, is not the poor lady to be pitied?

Col. Ay, and rescu'd too, Landlord.

Free. In my opinion, that's impossible.

Col. There is nothing impossible to a lover.—Will you assist me, if occasion requires?

Sack. In every thing I can, Colonel.

Free. I'll answer for him; and whatever I can serve you in, you may depend on.

Col. First, I'll attack my beau guardian.—You see I'm equipped in his own style of dress for the purpose. Where lives he?

Free. O, you'll find him in the Park at this very time; at least, I never pass through at this hour, without seeing him there.—But what do you intend?

Col. To address him in his own way, and find what he designs to do with the lady.

Free. And what then?

Col. Nay, that I can't tell;—but I shall take my measures accordingly.

Sack. Well, 'tis a mad undertaking, in my mind: but here's to your success, Colonel. [*Drinks.*]

Col. 'Tis something out of the way, I confess; but fortune may chance to smile, and I succeed—

Bold was the man who ventur'd first to sea,

But the first vent'ring lovers bolder were.

The path of love's a dark and dang'rous way,

Without a landmark, or one friendly star,

And he that runs the risk deserves the fair. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

The Park.

SIR PHILIP *discovered on a Bench.*

Enter COLONEL FAINWELL.

Col. [Sits down, and looks at his Watch.] His Grace should have been here above ten minutes since ;—do these fellows think their rank is an excuse for want of manners ?

[Puts up his Watch, and takes out his Snuff Box.

Sir P. May I presume, sir——

Col. Sir, you honour me. *[Presenting the Box.*

Sir P. He speaks good English—though he must be a foreigner.—*[Aside.]* The snuff is extremely good,—and the box prodigious fine : the work is French, I presume, sir ?

Col. I bought it in Paris, sir——I do think the workmanship pretty neat.

Sir P. Neat ! 'tis exquisitely fine, sir. Pray, sir, if I may take the liberty of inquiring, what country is so happy to claim the birth of the finest gentleman in the universe ? France, I presume ?

Col. Then you don't think me an Englishman ?

Sir P. No, upon my soul, don't I.

Col. I am sorry for't.

Sir P. Impossible you should wish to be an Englishman ! Pardon me, sir, this island could not produce a person of such alertness.

Col. As this mirror shows you, sir. *[Puts up a Pocket Glass to SIR PHILIP'S Face.]* I know not how to

distinguish you, sir, but your mien and address speak you to be right honourable.

Sir P. Thus great souls judge of others by themselves.—I am only adorn'd with knighthood, that's all, I assure you, sir; my name is Sir Philip Mode-love.

Col. Of French extraction?

Sir P. My father was French.

Col. One may plainly perceive it—There is a certain gaiety peculiar to my nation, (for I will own myself a Frenchman,) which distinguishes us every where.—A person of your figure would be a vast addition to a coronet.

Sir P. I must own I had the offer of a barony about five years ago, but I abhorr'd the fatigue which must have attended it. I could never yet bring myself to join with either party.

Col. You are perfectly in the right, Sir Philip,—a fine person should not embark himself in the slovenly concern of politics: dress and pleasure are objects proper for the soul of a fine gentleman.

Sir P. And love——

Col. O, that's included under the article of pleasure.

Sir P. May I crave your name, sir?

Col. My name is La Fainwell, sir, at your service.

Sir P. The La Fainwells are French, I know; though the name is become very numerous in Great Britain of late years—I was sure you was French the moment I laid my eyes upon you; I could not come into the supposition of your being an Englishman: this island produces few such ornaments.

Col. Pardon me, Sir Philip, this island has two things superior to all nations under the sun.

Sir P. Ah! what are they?

Col. The ladies, and the laws.

Sir P. The laws, indeed, do claim a preference of other nations,—but, by my soul, there are fine women

every where.—I must own I have felt their power in all countries.

Col. Are you married, Sir Philip?

Sir P. No ; nor do I believe I ever shall enter into that honourable state : I have an absolute *tendre* for the whole sex.

Col. That's more than they have for you, I dare swear. [*Aside.*] —I find I was very much mistaken, —I imagined you had been married to that young lady, whom I saw in the chariot with you this morning in Gracechurch street.

Sir P. Who, Nancy Lovely ? I am a piece of a guardian to that lady : you must know, her father, I thank him, joined me with three of the most preposterous old fellows, that, upon my soul, I am in pain for the poor girl ;—she must certainly lead apes, as the saying is ;—ha, ha !

Col. That's pity, Sir Philip. If the lady would give me leave, I would endeavour to avert that curse.

Sir P. I assure you, Mr. Fainwell, I am for marrying her, for I hate the trouble of a guardian, especially among such wretches ; but resolve never to agree to the choice of any one of them,—and I fancy they'll be even with me, for they never came into any proposal of mine yet.

Col. I wish I had your leave to try them, Sir Philip.

Sir P. With all my soul, sir ; I can refuse a person of your appearance nothing.

Col. Sir, I am infinitely obliged to you.

Sir P. But do you really like matrimony ?

Col. I believe I could with that lady.

Sir P. The only point in which we differ——But you are master of so many qualifications, that I can excuse one fault ; for I must think it a fault in a fine gentleman ; and that you are such, I'll give it under my hand.

Col. I wish you'd give me your consent to marry Mrs. Lovely under your hand, Sir Philip.

Sir P. I'll do't, if you'll step into St. James's coffee-house, where we may have pen and ink;—though I can't foresee what advantage my consent will be to you, without you could find a way to get the rest of the guardians.—But I'll introduce you, however:—she is now at a quaker's, where I carried her this morning, when you saw us in Gracechurch street.—I assure you, she has an odd *ragout* of guardians, as you will find when you hear the characters, which I'll endeavour to give you as we go along.—Hey, *Pierre, Jaque, Renno!*—where are you all, scoundrels?—Order the chariot to Saint James's coffee-house.

Col. Le Noir, la Brun, la Blanc.—*Morbleu, ou sont ces Coquins la? Allons, Monsieur le Chevalier.*

Sir P. Ah, *Pardonez moi, Monsieur.*

Col. Not one step, upon my soul, Sir Philip.

Sir P. The best bred man in Europe, positively.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

OBADIAH PRIM'S House.

Enter ANN LOVELY, followed by MRS. PRIM.

Mrs. P. Then thou wilt not obey me: and thou dost really think those fallals become thee!

Ann L. I do, indeed.

Mrs. P. Now will I be judged by all sober people, if I don't look more like a modest woman than thou dost, Ann.

Ann L. More like a hypocrite, you mean, Mrs. Prim.

Mrs. P. Ah, Ann, Ann! that wicked Philip Mode-love will undo thee.—Satan so fills thy heart with

pride, during the three months of his guardianship, that thou becomest a stumbling block to the upright.

Ann L. Pray who are they? Are the pinch'd cap and formal hood the emblems of sanctity? Does your virtue consist in your dress, Mrs. Prim?

Enter OBADIAH PRIM.

Ob. P. Not stripp'd of thy vanity, yet, Ann!—Why dost thou not make her put it off, Sarah?

Mrs. P. She will not do it.

Ann L. I cannot think my father meant this tyranny! No, you usurp an authority which he never intended you should take.

Ob. P. Hark thee, dost thou call good counsel tyranny? Do I, or my wife tyrannize, when we desire thee in all love to put off thy tempting attire, and veil thy provokers to sin?

Ann L. Deliver me, good Heaven! or I shall go distracted. [*Walks about.*] I wish I were in my grave! Kill me, rather than treat me thus?

Ob. P. Kill thee! ha, ha! thou thinkest thou art acting some lewd play, sure:—Kill thee! art thou prepared for death, Ann Lovely? No, no, thou wouldst rather have a husband, Ann:—thou wantest a gilt coach, with six lazy fellows behind, to flaunt it in the ring of vanity, among the princes and rulers of the land—who pamper themselves with the fatness thereof; but I will take care, that none shall squander away thy father's estate: thou shalt marry none such, Ann.

Ann L. Wou'd you marry me to one of your own canting sect?

Ob. P. Yea, verily, no one else shall ever get my consent, I do assure thee, Ann.

Ann L. And I do assure thee, Obadiah, that I will as soon turn papist, and die in a convent.

Mrs. P. O, wickedness!

Ann L. O, stupidity!

Ob. P. O, blindness of heart!

Ann L. Thou blinder of the world, don't provoke me, least I betray your sanctity, and leave your wife to judge of your purity:—What were the emotions of your spirit, when you squeez'd Mary by the hand last night in the pantry?—Don't you remember that, Mr. Prim?

Mrs. P. What does she say, Obadiah?

Ob. P. She talketh unintelligibly, Sarah.—Which way did she hear this? This should not have reach'd the ears of the wicked ones:—verily, it troubleth me.
[*Aside.*

Enter AMINADAB.

Amin. Philip Modelove, whom they call Sir Philip, is below, and such another with him; shall I send them up.

Ob. P. Yea.

[*Exit AMIN.*

Enter SIR PHILIP and COLONEL FAINWELL.

Sir P. How dost thou do, friend Prim? Odso! my she-friend here too! What, are you documenting Miss Nancy; reading her a lecture upon the pinch'd coif, I warrant ye.

Mrs. P. I am sure thou didst never read her any lecture that was good.—My flesh riseth so at these wicked ones, that prudence adviseth me to withdraw from their sight.
[*Exit.*

Ob. P. Verily, Philip, thou wilt spoil this maiden.

Sir P. I find we still differ in opinion; but that we may none of us spoil her, pi'ythee, Prim, let us consent to marry her.—I have sent for our brother guardians to meet me here about this very thing—madam, will you give me leave to recommend a hus-

band to you?—Here's a gentleman, whom in my mind, you can have no objection to.

[Presents the COLONEL to her, she looks another Way.]

Col. A fine woman, a fine horse, and fine equipage, are the finest things in the universe: and if I am so happy to possess you, madam, I shall become the envy of mankind, as much as you outshine your whole sex.

[As he takes her Hand to kiss it, he endeavours to put a Letter into it; she lets it drop—

PRIM takes it up.]

Ann L. I have no ambition to appear conspicuously ridiculous, sir.

[Turning from him.]

Col. So fail the hopes of Fainwell.

Ann L. Ha! Fainwell! 'Tis he! What have I done? Prim has the letter, and it will be discover'd.

[Aside.]

Ob. P. Friend, I know not thy name, so cannot call thee by it; but thou seest thy letter is unwelcome to the maiden, she will not read it.

Ann L. Nor shall you; [Snatches the Letter.] I'll tear it in a thousand pieces, and scatter it, as I will the hopes of all those that any of you shall recommend to me. Oh, Fainwell! whatever thy contrivance be, prosper it Heaven.

[Aside.—Exit.]

Sir P. Ha! Right woman, faith!

Col. Excellent woman!

Ob. P. Friend, thy garb savoureth too much of the vanity of the age for my approbation; nothing that resembleth Philip Modelove shall I love, mark that;—therefore, friend Philip, I advise thee to shuffle him again with the rest of mankind, for I like him not.

Sir P. In my opinion, this is very inhuman treatment, as to the lady, Mr. Prim.

Ob. P. Thy opinion and mine happen to differ as much as our occupations, friend; busines requireth

my presence, and folly thine; and so I must bid thee farewell. [Exit.

Sir P. Here's breeding for you, Mr. Fainwell! Gad take me,

Half my estate I'd give to see them bit.

Col. I hope to bite you all, if my plot hit.

[Exeunt.

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

The Tavern.

SACKBUT *and the* COLONEL, *in an Egyptian Dress.*

Sack. A lucky beginning, colonel,—you have got the old beau's consent.

Col. Ay, he's a reasonable creature; but the other three will require some pains.—Shall I pass upon old Periwinkle, think you? 'Egad, in my mind, I look as antique as if I had been preserved in the Ark. I hope he'll come.

Sack. I wish all my debts would come as sure.

Col. Let's have a bottle of sack, Landlord; our ancestors drank sack.

Sack. You shall have it.

Col. And whereabouts is the trap-door you mentioned?

Sack. There's the conveyance, sir. [Exit.

Col. Now, if I should cheat all these roguish guar-

dians, and carry off my mistress in triumph, it would be what the French call a *grand coup d'eclat*—Odso! here comes Periwinkle.—Ah! Deuce take this beard; pray Jupiter it does not give me the slip, and spoil all.

Enter SACKBUT, with Wine, and PERIWINKLE following.

Sack. Sir, this gentleman hearing you have been a great traveller, and a person of fine speculation, begs leave to take a glass with you; he is a man of a curious taste himself.

Col. The gentleman has it in his face and garb; sir, you are welcome.

Per. Sir, I honour a traveller, and men of your inquiring disposition; the oddness of your habit pleases me extremely; 'tis very antique, and for that I like it.

Col. 'Tis very antique, sir;—this habit once belonged to the famous Claudius Ptolemeus, who lived in the year one hundred and thirty-five.

Sack. If he keeps up to the sample, he shall lye with the devil for a bean-stack, and win it every straw. [*Aside.*]

Per. A hundred and thirty-five! why, that's prodigious now!—Well, certainly 'tis the finest thing in the world to be a traveller.

Col. For my part, I value none of the modern fashions a fig-leaf.

Per. No more don't I, sir; I had rather be the jest of a fool, than his favourite.—I am laugh'd at here for my singularity—This coat, you must know, sir, was formerly worn by that ingenious and very learned person, Mr. John Tradescant, of Lambeth.

Col. John Tradescant! Let me embrace you, sir—John Tradescant was my uncle, by my mother's side; and I thank you for the honour you do his memory; he was a very curious man indeed.

Per. Your uncle, sir——Nay, then 'tis no wonder that your taste is so refined; why you have it in your blood.—My humble service to you, sir; to the immortal memory of John Tradescant, your never-to-be-forgotten uncle. [Drinks.

Col. Give me a glass, Landlord.

Per. I find you are primitive, even in your wine; Canary was the drink of our wise forefathers; 'tis balsamic, and saves the charge of 'pothecaries' cordials—Oh! that I had lived in your uncle's days! or rather, that he were now alive;—Oh! how proud he'd be of such a nephew!

Sack. Oh, pox! that would have spoil'd the jest.

[Aside.

Per. A person of your curiosity must have collected many rarities.

Col. I have some, sir, which are not yet come ashore; as an Egyptian idol.

Per. Pray, what may that be?

Col. It is, sir, a kind of an ape, which they formerly worshipp'd in that country; I took it from the breast of a female mummy.

Per. Ha, ha! our women retain part of their idolatry to this day, for many an ape lies on a lady's breast, ha, ha!——

Sack. A smart old thief.

[Aside.

Col. Lookye, sir, do you see this little phial?

Per. Pray you, what is it?

Col. This is call'd Poluflosboio.

Per. Poluflosboio!——It has a rumbling sound.

Col. Right, sir; it proceeds from a rumbling nature.—This water was part of those waves which bore Cleopatra's vessel when she sail'd to meet Antony.

Per. Well, of all that ever travelled, none had a taste like you.

Col. But here's the wonder of the world.—This,

sir, is called Zona, or Moros Musphonon; the virtues of this are inestimable.

Per. Moros Musphonon! What in the name of wisdom can that be?—To me it seems a plain belt.

Col. This girdle has carried me all the world over.

Per. You have carried it, you mean.

Col. I mean as I say, sir.—Whenever I am girded with this, I am invisible; and by turning this little screw, can be in the court of the Great Mogul, the Grand Signior, and King George, in as little time as your cook can poach an egg.

Per. You must pardon me, sir, I can't believe it.

Col. If my Landlord pleases, he shall try the experiment immediately.

Sack. I thank you kindly, sir, but I have no inclination to ride post to the devil.

Col. No, no, you sha'n't stir a foot, I'll only make you invisible.

Sack. But if you could not make me visible again.

Per. Come, try it upon me, sir, I am not afraid of the devil, nor all his tricks.—'Sbud, I'll stand 'em all.

Col. There, sir, put it on.—Come, Landlord, you and I must face the East. [*They turn about.*] Is it on, sir?

Per. 'Tis on. [*They turn about again.*]

Sack. Heaven protect me! Where is he?

Per. Why here, just where I was.

Sack. Where, where, in the name of virtue? Ah, poor Mr. Periwinkle!—Egad, look to't, you had best, sir; and let him be seen again, or I shall have you burnt for a wizzard.

Col. Have patience, good Landlord.

Per. But really don't you see me now?

Sack. No more than I see my grandmother, that died forty years ago.

Per. Are you sure you don't lye? Methinks I

stand just where I did, and see you as plain as I did before.

Sack. Ah! I wish I could see you once again.

Col. Take off the girdle, sir. [*He takes it off.*]

Sack. Ah, sir, I am glad to see you with all my heart. [*Embraces him.*]

Per. This is very odd; certainly there must be some trick in't.—Pray, sir, will you do me the favour to put it on yourself.

Col. With all my heart.

Per. But first I'll secure the door.

Col. You know how to turn the screw, Mr. Sackbut?

Sack. Yes, yes. Come, Mr. Periwinkle, we must turn full east.

[*They turn, the COLONEL sinks down the Trap Door.*]

Col. 'Tis done; now turn. [*They turn.*]

Per. Ha! Mercy upon me; my flesh creeps upon my bones.—This must be a conjurer, Mr. Sackbut.

Sack. He is the devil, I think.

Per. Oh, Mr. Sackbut, why do you name the devil, when perhaps he may be at your elbow?

Sack. At my elbow, marry, Heaven forbid.

Col. Are you satisfied? [*From under the Stage.*]

Per. Yes, sir, yes—How hollow his voice sounds!

Sack. Yours seem'd just the same—Faith, I wish this girdle were mine, I'd sell wine no more. Harkye, Mr. Periwinkle—[*Takes him aside till the COLONEL rises again.*—if he would sell this girdle, you might travel with great expedition.

Col. But it is not to be parted with for money.

Per. I am sorry for't, sir: because I think it the greatest curiosity I ever heard of.

Col. By the advice of a learned physiognomist in Grand Cairo, who consulted the lines in my face, I returned to England, where he told me I should find

a rarity in the keeping of *four* men, which I was born to possess for the benefit of mankind; and the *first* of the *four* that gave me his consent, I should present him with this girdle——"Till I have found this jewel, I shall not part with the girdle.

Per. What can that rarity be! Didn't he name it to you?

Col. Yes, sir: he called it a chaste, beautiful, unaffected woman.

Per. Pish! Women are no rarities——I never had any great taste that way. I married, indeed, to please my father, and I had a girl to please my wife; but she and the child (thank Heaven) died together——Women are the very gewgaws of the creation; play-things for boys, who, when they write man, they ought to throw aside.

Sack. A fine lecture to be read to a circle of ladies. [Aside.]

Per. What woman is there, dressed in all the pride and foppery of the times, can boast of such a foretop as the cockatoo?

Col. I must humour him.—[Aside.]—Such a skin as the lizard?

Per. Such a shining breast as the humming bird?

Col. Such a shape as the antelope?

Per. Or, in all the artful mixture of their various dresses, have they half the beauty of one box of butterflies?

Col. No, that must be allowed——For my part, if it were not for the benefit of mankind, I'd have nothing to do with them, for they are as indifferent to me as a sparrow or a flesh-fly.

Per. Pray, sir, what benefit is the world to reap from this lady?

Col. Why, sir, she is to bear me a son, who shall revive the art of embalming, and the old Roman manner of burying their dead; and, for the benefit of pos-

terity, he is to discover the longitude, so long sought for in vain.

Per. Odd! these are valuable things, Mr. Sack-but!

Sack. He hits it off admirably, and t'other swallows it like sack and sugar. [*Aside.*]—Certainly this lady must be your ward, Mr. Periwinkle, by her being under the care of four persons.

Per. By the description it should—'Egad, if I could get that girdle, I'd ride with the sun, and make the tour of the world in four and twenty hours. [*Aside.*] And are you to give that girdle to the first of the four guardians that shall give his consent to marry that lady, say you, sir?

Col. I am so order'd, when I can find him.

Per. I fancy I know the very woman—her name is Ann Lovely?

Col. Excellent!—he said, indeed, that the first letter of her name was L.

Per. Did he really?—Well, that's prodigiously amazing, that a person in Grand Cairo should know any thing of my ward.

Col. Your ward!

Per. To be plain with you, sir, I am one of those four guardians.

Col. Are you indeed, sir? I am transported to find the man who is to possess this Moros Musphonon is a person of so curious a taste—Here is a writing drawn up by that famous Egyptian, which if you will please to sign, you must turn your face full north, and the girdle is yours.

Per. If I live till this boy is born, I'll be embalm'd, and sent to the Royal Society when I die.

Col. That you shall most certainly.

Enter DRAWER.

Draw. Here's Mr. Staytape, the taylor, enquires for you, Colonel.

Col. Who do you speak to, you son of a whore?

Per. Ha! colonel.

[*Aside.*]

Col. Confound the blundering dog!

[*Aside.*]

Draw. Why to Colonel——

Sack. Get you out, you rascal.

[*Kicks him out, and goes after him.*]

Draw. What the devil is the matter?

Col. This dog has ruin'd all my schemes, I see by Periwinkle's looks.

[*Aside.*]

Per. How finely I should have been chous'd!—Colonel, you'll pardon me that I did not give you your title before—it was pure ignorance, faith it was——Pray—hem, hem!—Pray, Colonel, what post had this learned Egyptian in your regiment?

Col. A pox of your sneer. [*Aside.*—I don't understand you, sir.

Per. No! that's strange! I understand you, Colonel——An Egyptian of Grand Cairo! ha, ha, ha!—I am sorry such a well-invented tale should do you no more service——We old fellows can see as far into a millstone as them that pick it—I am not to be trick'd out of my trust—mark that.

Col. The devil! I must carry it off; I wish I were fairly out. [*Aside.*—Lookye, sir; you may make what jest you please—but the stars will be obey'd, sir; and, depend upon't, I shall have the lady, and you none of the girdle.

Now must bob-wig and business come in play;

A thirty thousand pound girl leads the way.

[*Exit.*]

Per. The stars! ha, ha!—No star has favoured you it seems——The girdle! ha, ha, ha! none of your legerdemain tricks can pass upon me——Why; what a pack of trumpery has this rogue picked up?—His Pagod, Poluflosboio, his Zonas, Moros Musphonons, and the devil knows what——But I'll take care—Ha, gone!—Ay, 'twas time to sneak off.——Soho! the house!

Enter SACKBUT.

Where is this trickster? Send for a constable, I'll have this rascal before the lord mayor; I'll Grand Cairo him, with a pox to him—I believe you had a hand in putting this imposture upon me, Sackbut.

Sack. Who I, Mr. Periwinkle? I scorn it; I perceiv'd he was a cheat, and left the room on purpose to send for a constable to apprehend him, and endeavour'd to stop him when he went out—But the rogue made but one step from the stairs to the door, call'd a coach, leap'd into it, and drove away like the devil, as Mr. Freeman can witness, who is at the bar, and desires to speak with you; he is this minute come to town.

Per. Send him in. [*Exit SACKBUT.*] What a scheme this rogue has laid! How I should have been laugh'd at, had it succeeded!

Enter FREEMAN.

Mr. Freeman, I had like to have been imposed upon here by the veriest rascal——

Free. I am sorry to hear it—The dog flew for't; he had not 'scap'd me, if I had been aware of him; Sackbut struck at him, but miss'd his blow, or he had done his business for him.

Per. I believe you never heard of such a contrivance, Mr. Freeman, as this fellow had found out.

Free. Mr. Sackbut has told me the whole story, Mr. Periwinkle; but now I have something to tell you of much more importance to yourself.—I happen'd to lie one night at Coventry, and knowing your uncle, Sir Toby Periwinkle, I paid him a visit, and, to my great surprise, found him dying.

Per. Dying?

Free. Dying, in all appearance; the servants weeping, the room in darkness: the 'pothecary, shaking

his head, told me the doctors had given him over; and then there are small hopes, you know.

Per. I hope he made his will—he always told me he would make me his heir.

Free. I have heard you say as much, and therefore resolved to give you notice. I should think it would not be amiss if you went down to-morrow morning.

Per. It is a long journey, and the roads very bad.

Free. But he has a great estate, and the land very good—Think upon that.

Per. Why, that's true, as you say; I'll think upon it: in the mean time, I give you many thanks for your civility, Mr. Freeman, and should be glad of your company to dine with me.

Free. I am oblig'd to be at Jonathan's coffee-house at two, and now it is half an hour after one; if I despatch my business, I'll wait on you; I know your hour.

Per. You shall be very welcome, Mr. Freeman; and so your humble servant. [Exeunt.]

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

JONATHAN'S Coffee House, in'Change Alley. A Crowd of People with Rolls of Paper in their Hands; a Bar, and COFFEE BOYS waiting.

Enter TRADELOVE and STOCK JOBBERS, with Rolls of Paper.

1 *Stock.* South Sea at seven eighths; who buys?

2 *Stock.* South Sea bonds due at Michaelmas, 1718. Class lottery tickets?

Trade. Harkye, Gabriel, you'll pay the difference of that stock we transacted for t'other day?

Gab. Ay, Mr. Tradelove, here's a note for the money. [*Gives him a Note.*]

Trade. I would fain bite the spark in the brown coat; he comes very often into the Alley, but never employs a broker.

Enter COLONEL and FREEMAN.

Mr. Freeman, your servant! Who is that gentleman?

Free. A Dutch merchant just come to England? but harkye, Mr. Tradelove—I have a piece of news will get you as much as the French king's death did if you are expeditious. But how does your ward, Ann Lovely.

Trade. Pshaw! never trouble your head about her, man?

Free. [*Showing him a Letter.*] Read there; I received it just now from one that belongs to the Emperor's minister.

Trade. [*Reads.*] *Sir, as I have many obligations to you, I cannot miss any opportunity to show my gratitude; this moment my lord has received a private express, that the Spaniards have rais'd their siege from before Cagliari; if this proves any advantage to you, it will answer both the ends and wishes of, sir, your most obliged humble servant,*

HENRICUS DUSSELDORP.

Postscript.—*In two or three hours the news will be public.*

May one depend upon this, Mr. Freeman?

[*Aside to FREEMAN.*]

Free. You may.—I never knew this person send me a false piece of news in my life.

Trade. Sir, I am much obliged to you—'Egad, 'tis rare news.—Who sells South Sea for next week?

Stock-Job. [*All together.*] I sell; I, I, I, I, I sell.

1 *Stock.* I'll sell five thousand pounds for next week at five eighths.

2 *Stock.* I'll sell ten thousand, at five eighths, for the same time.

Trade. Nay, nay, hold, hold, not all together, gentlemen; I'll be no bull, I'll buy no more than I can take: will you sell ten thousand pounds at a half, for any day next week, except Saturday?

1 *Stock.* I'll sell it you, Mr. Tradelove.

[FREEMAN *whispers to One of the BROKERS.*

1 *Stock.* [*Aside.* The Spaniards rais'd the siege of Cagliari! I don't believe one word of it.

2 *Stock.* Rais'd the siege! as much as as you have rais'd the monument.

Free. 'Tis rais'd, I assure you, sir.

1 *Stock.* What will you lay on't?

Free. What you please.

1 *Stock.* Why, I have a brother upon the spot, in the Emperor's service; I am certain, if there were any such thing, I should have had a letter. Let it come where it will, I'll hold you fifty pounds 'tis false.

Free. 'Tis done.

2 *Stock.* I'll lay you a brace of hundreds upon the same.

Free. I'll take you.

Trade. I'll lay any man a brace of thousands the siege is rais'd.

Free. The Dutch merchant is your man to take in.

[*Aside to TRADELOVE.*

Trade. Does he not know the news?

Free. Not a syllable; if he did, he would bet a hundred thousand pounds as soon as one penny;—he's plaguy rich, and a mighty man at wagers.

[*To TRADELOVE.*

Trade. Say you so—'Egad, I'll bite him, if possible.—Are you from Holland, sir?

Col. Ya, mynheer.

Trade. Had you the news before you came away?

Col. What believe you, mynheer?

Trade. What do I believe? Why, I believe that the Spaniards have actually rais'd the siege of Cagliari.

Col. What duyvel's news is dat? 'Tis niet waer, mynheer——'tis no true, sir.

Trade. 'Tis so true, mynheer, that I'll lay you two thousand pounds upon it.—You are sure the letter may be depended upon, Mr. Freeman?

Free. Do you think I would venture my money, if I were not sure of the truth of it?

[*Aside to TRADELOVE.*

Col. Two duosend pound, mynheer, 'tis gadaen—dis gentleman sal hold de gelt.

[*Gives FREEMAN Money.*

Trade. With all my heart—this binds the wager.

Free. You have certainly lost, mynheer; the siege is rais'd, indeed.

Col. Ik sal ye dubbled honden, if you please.

Free. I am let into the secret, therefore won't win your money.

Trade. Ha, ha, ha! I have snapped the Dutchman, faith, ha, ha! this is no ill day's work.—Pray, may I crave your name, mynheer?

Col. Myn naem, mynheer! myn naem is Jan van Timtamtirelereletta Heer Fainwell.

Trade. Zounds! 'tis a damn'd long name; I shall never remember it—Myn Heer van, Tim, Tim, Tim, —What the devil is it?

Free. Oh, never heed, I know the gentleman, and will pass my word for twice the sum.

Trade. That's enough.

Col. You'll hear of me sooner than you'll wish, old gentleman, I fancy. [*Aside.*]—You'll come to Sack-but's, Freeman.

[*Exit.*

Free. Immediately. [*Aside to the COLONEL.*

Trade. Mr. Freeman, I give you many thanks for your kindness——

Free. I fear you'll repent, when you know all,
[*Aside.*

Trade. Will you dine with me?

Free. I'm engag'd at Sackbut's; adieu. [*Exit.*

Trade. Sir, your humble servant. Now, I'll see what I can do upon 'Change with my news. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

The Tavern.

Enter FREEMAN and COLONEL.

Free. Ha, ha, ha! The old fellow swallowed the bait as greedily as a gudgeon.

Col. I have him, faith, ha, ha, ha!—His two thousand pounds secure——If he would keep his money, he must part with the lady, ha, ha!——

Enter SACKBUT.

Sack. Joy, joy, Colonel! the luckiest accident in the world.

Col. What say'st thou?

Sack. This letter does your business.

Col. [*Reads.*] *To Obadiah Prim, Hosier, near the building call'd the Monument, in London.*

Free. A letter to Prim! How came you by it?

Sack. Looking over the letters our post-woman brought, as I always do, to see what letters are directed to my house (for she can't read,) you must know, I 'spy'd this directed to Prim, so paid for it among the rest; I have read it, and fancy you'll like the project.—Read, read, Colonel.

Col. [*Reads.*] *Friend Prim, there is arrived from Pennsylvania one Simon Pure, a leader of the faithful,*

who hath sojourned with us eleven days, and hath been of great comfort to the brethren.—He intendeth for the quarterly meeting in London; I have recommended him to thy house. I pray thee treat him kindly, and let thy wife cherish him, for he's of weakly constitution—he will depart from us the third day; which is all from thy friend in the faith,

AMINADAB HOLDFAST.

Ha, ha, excellent! I understand you, Landlord; I am to personate this Simon Pure, am I not?

Sack. Don't you like the hint?

Col. Admirably well!

Free. 'Tis the best contrivance in the world, if the right Simon gets not there before you.

Col. No, no, the Quakers never ride post. Suppose, Freeman, you should wait at the Bristol coach, that if you see any such person, you might contrive to give me notice.—

Free. I will—the country dress and boots, are they ready?

Sack. Yes, yes, every thing,—sir.

[*Bell rings.—Exit.*

Free. Thou must despatch Periwinkle first—remember his uncle, Sir Toby Periwinkle, and his whole history.

Col. Never fear, let me alone for that—but what's the steward's name?

Free. His name is Pillage.

Col. Enough—

Enter SACKBUT.

Sack. Zounds! Mr. Freeman! yonder is Tradelove in the damned'st passion in the world—He swears you are in the house—he says you told him you were to dine here.

Free. I did so, ha, ha, ha! he has found himself bit already.—

Col. The devil! he must not see me now.

Sack. I told him I expected you here, but you were not come yet —

Free. Very well—make you haste out, Colonel, and let me alone to deal with him: where is he?

Sack. In the King's Head.

Col. You remember what I told you?

Free. Ay, ay, very well. Landlord, let him know I am come in—and now, Mr. Pillage, success attend you. [Exit SACKBUT.]

Col. Mr. Proteus rather——

From changing shape, and imitating Jove,
I draw the happy omens of my love.

[Exit COLONEL.]

Enter TRADELOVE.

Free. Zounds! Mr. Tradelove, we're bit, it seems."

Trade. Bit, do you call it, Mr. Freeman! I am ruin'd.—Pox on your news.

Free. Pox on the rascal that sent it me.—

Trade. Sent it you! Why Gabriel Skinflint has been at the minister's, and spoke with him, and he has assur'd him 'tis every syllable false; he received no such express.

Free. I know it: I this minute parted with my friend, who protested he never sent me any such letter—Some roguish stock-jobber has done it on purpose to make me lose my money, that's certain: I wish I knew who he was, I'd make him repent it—I have lost 300l. by it.

Trade. What signifies your three hundred pounds to what I have lost? There's two thousand pounds to that Dutchman with a cursed long name, besides the stock I bought: the devil! I could tear my flesh—I must never show my face upon 'Change more;—for, by my soul, I can't pay it.

Free. I am very much concern'd that I was the

occasion, and wish I could be an instrument of retrieving your misfortune; for my own, I value it not. Adso, a thought comes into my head, that, well improv'd, may be of service.

Trade. Ah! there's no thought can be of any service to me, without paying the money, or running away.

Free. How do we know? What do you think of my proposing Mrs. Lovely to him? He is a single man—and I heard him say he had a mind to marry an English woman—nay, more than that, he said some body told him you had a pretty ward—he wish'd you had betted her instead of your money.

Trade. Ay, but he'd be hang'd before he'd take her instead of the money; the Dutch are too covetous for that; besides, he did not know that there were three more of us, I suppose?

Free. So much the better; you may venture to give him your consent, if he'll forgive you the wager: it is not your business to tell him, that your consent will signify nothing.

Trade. That's right, as you say; but will he do it, think you?

Free. I can't tell that; but I'll try what I can do with him.

Trade. You must extol her beauty, double her portion, and tell him I have the entire disposal of her; and that she can't marry without my consent:—and that I am a covetous rogue, and will never part with her without a valuable consideration.

Free. Ay, ay, let me alone for a lie at a pinch.

Trade. 'Egad, if you can bring this to bear, Mr. Freeman, I'll make you whole again; I'll pay the three hundred pounds you lost, with all my soul.

Free. Well, I'll use my best endeavours——Where will you be?

Trade. At home; pray Heaven you prosper——If

I were but the sole trustee now, I should not fear it.
Who the devil would be a guardian?

If, when cash runs low, our coffers t' enlarge,
We can't, like other stocks, transfer our charge.

[Exit.]

Free. Ha, ha, ha!—he has it.

[Exit.]

SCENE III.

PERIWINKLE'S House.

Enter PERIWINKLE on one Side, and FOOTMAN on the other.

Foot. A gentleman from Coventry inquires for you, sir.

Per. From my uncle, I warrant you:—bring him up. [*Exit FOOT.*] —This will save me the trouble, as well as expense of a journey.

Enter COLONEL.

Col. Is your name Periwinkle, sir?

Per. It is, sir.

Col. I am sorry for the message I bring—My old master, whom I served these forty years, claims the sorrow due from a faithful servant to an indulgent master. [*Weeps.*]

Per. By this, I understand, sir, my uncle, Sir Toby Periwinkle, is dead.

Col. He is, sir, and he has left you heir to seven hundred a year, in as good abbey-land as ever paid Peterpence to Rome.—I wish you long to enjoy it, but my tears will flow when I think of my benefactor.—[*Weeps.*] Ah, he was a good man!—he has not left many of his fellows—the poor lament him sorely.

Per. I pray, sir, what office bore you?

Col. I was his steward, sir.

Per. I have heard him mention you with much respect:—your name is——

Col. Pillage, sir.

Per. Ay, Pillage, I do remember he called you Pillage.—Pray, Mr. Pillage, when did my uncle die?

Col. Monday last, at four in the morning. About two he sign'd his will, and gave it into my hands, and strictly charged me to leave Coventry the moment he expired; and deliver it to you with what speed I could. I have obey'd him, sir, and there is the will.

[*Gives it to PER.*]

Per. 'Tis very well, I'll lodge it in the Commons.

Col. There are two things which he forgot to insert, but charg'd me to tell you, that he desir'd you'd perform them as readily as if you had found them written in the will—which is, to remove his corpse, and bury him by his father, at St. Paul's Covent Garden, and to give all his servants mourning.

Per. That will be a considerable charge: a pox of all modern fashions. [*Aside.*] Well, it shall be done!—Mr. Pillage, I will agree with one of death's fashion-mongers, call'd an undertaker, to go down, and bring up the body.

Col. I hope, sir I shall have the honour to serve you in the same station I did your worthy uncle; I have not many years to stay behind him, and would gladly spend them in the family where I was brought up—— [*Weeps.*] He was a kind and tender master to me.

Per. Pray don't grieve, Mr. Pillage, you shall hold your place, and every thing else which you held under my uncle.—You make me weep to see you so concern'd. [*Weeps.*] He liv'd to a good old age, and we are all mortal.

Col. We are so, sir, and therefore I must beg you to sign this lease:—you'll find Sir Toby has taken particular notice of it in his will—I could not get it time enough from the lawyer, or he had sign'd before he died.

[*Gives him a Paper.*]

Per. A lease! for what?

Col. I rented a hundred a year of Sir Toby upon lease, which lease expires at Lady-day next. I desire to renew it for twenty years—that's all, sir.

Per. Let me see. [*Looks over the Lease.*] Very well—Let's see what he says in his will about it.—[*Lays the Lease upon the Table, and looks on the Will.*]—Ho, here it is—*The farm lying—now in possession of Samuel Pillage—suffer him to renew his lease—at the same rent*—Very well, Mr. Pillage, I see my uncle does mention it, and I'll perform his will. Give me the lease—[*COLONEL gives it him, he looks upon it, and lays it upon the Table.*] Pray you step to the door, and call for a pen and ink, Mr. Pillage.

Col. I have a pen and ink in my pocket, sir, [*Pulls out an Ink-horn.*] I never go without that.

Per. I think it belongs to your profession—[*He looks upon the pen, while the COLONEL changes the Lease, and lays down the Contract.*] I doubt this is but a sorry pen, though it may serve to write my name.

[*Writes.*]

Col. Little does he think what he signs. [*Aside.*]

Per. There is your lease, Mr. Pillage. [*Gives him the Paper.*] Now I must desire you to make what haste you can down to Coventry, and take care of every thing, and I'll send down the undertaker for the body; do you attend it up, and whatever charge you are at, I'll repay you.

Col. You have paid me already, I thank you, sir.

[*Aside.*]

Per. Will you dine with me?

Col. I would rather not; there are some of my neighbours which I met as I came along, who leave

BOLD STROKE FOR A WIFE.



PERIWINKLE. — VERY WELL. MY PILLAGE, I SEE, MY
UNCLE DOES MENTION IT.

ACT IV.

SCENE III.

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the town this afternoon, they told me, and I should be glad of their company down.

Per. Well, well, I won't detain you.

Col. I don't care how soon I am out. [*Aside.*

Per. I will give orders about mourning.

Col. You will have cause to mourn, when you know. [*Aside.—Exit.*

Per. Seven hundred a year!—I wish he had died seventeen years ago:—What a valuable collection of rarities might I have had by this time!—Odso, I have a good mind to begin my travels now;—let me see—I am but sixty!—My father, grandfather, and great grandfather, reach'd ninety odd;—I have almost forty years good:—Let me consider—what will seven hundred a year amount to in—ay, in thirty years? I'll say but thirty—thirty times seven is seven times thirty—that is—just twenty-one thousand pounds,—'Tis a great deal of money!

With nature's curious works I'll raise my fame,
That men, till Doomsday, may repeat my name.

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

A Tavern.

FREEMAN and TRADELOVE over a Bottle.

Trade. Come, Mr. Freeman, here's Mynheer Jan Van Tim—tam—tam—I shall never think of that Dutchman's name.

Free. Mynheer Jan Van Timtamtirelereletta Heer Van Fainwell.

Trade. Ay, Heer Van Fainwell; I never heard such a confounded name in my life.—Here's his health, I say.

Free. With all my heart.

Trade. Faith, I never expected to have found so generous a thing in a Dutchman.

Enter COLONEL, dressed for the Dutch Merchant.

Col. Ha, Mynheer Tradelove, Ik ben sorry voor your troubles—maer Ik sal you easie maken, Ik will de gelt nie hebben——

Trade. I shall for ever acknowledge the obligation, sir.

Free. But you understand upon what condition, Mr. Tradelove—Mrs. Lovely.

Col. Ya, de Frow sal al te regt setten, Mynheer.

Trade. With all my heart, mynheer; you shall have my consent to marry her freely——

Free. Well, then, as I am a party concerned between you, Mynheer Jan Van Timtamtirelereletta Heer Van Fainwell shall give you a discharge of your wager under his own hand,——and you shall give him your consent to marry Mrs. Lovely under yours,——that is the way to avoid all manner of disputes hereafter.

Col. Ya, weeragtig.

Trade. Ay, ay, so it is, Mr. Freeman, I'll give it under mine this minute.

[Sits down to write.

Col. And so Ik sal.

[Does the same.

Free. So ho, house!

Enter SACKBUT.

Sack. Do you call, gentlemen?

Free. Ay, Mr. Sackbut, we shall want your hand here——

Trade. There, mynheer, there's my consent, as amply as you can desire; but you must insert your own name, for I know not how to spell it; I have left a blank for it. [Gives the COLONEL a Paper.

Col. Ya Ik sal dat well doen——

Free. Now, Mr. Sackbut, you and I will witness it.

[They write.

Col. Daer, Mynheer Tradelove, is your discharge.
[*Gives him a Paper.*]

Trade. Be pleas'd to witness this receipt too, gentlemen. [*FREEMAN and SACKBUT put their Hands.*]

Free. Ay, ay, that we will.

Col. Well, mynheer, ye most meer doen, ye most myn voorsprach to de frow syn.

Free. He means you must recommend him to the lady.—

Trade. That I will, and to the rest of my brother guardians.

Col. Wat, voor, de duyvel, heb you meer guardians?

Trade. Only three, mynheer.

Sack. But Mr. Tradelove is the principal, and he can do a great deal with the rest, sir.

Free. And he shall use his interest, I promise you, mynheer.

Trade. I will say all that ever I can think on to recominend you, mynheer; and if you please, I'll introduce you to the lady.

Col. Well, dat is wear—Maer ye must first sprenken of myn to de frow, and to oudere gentlemen.

Free. Ay, that's the best way,—and then I and the Heer Van Fainwell will meet you there.

Trade. I will go this moment, upon honour—Your most obedient humble seryant.—My speaking will do you little good, mynheer, ha ha! we have bit you, faith, ha, ha!

Well—my debt's discharged, and for Nan,

He has my consent—to get her, if he can. [*Exit.*]

Col. Ha, ha, ha; this was a masterpiece of contrivance, Freeman.—Come, pursue the fickle goddess while she's in the mood—Now for the Quaker.

Col. That's the hardest task.

Of all the counterfeits perform'd by man,

A soldier makes the simplest puritan. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

PRIM'S House.

Enter MRS. PRIM and ANN LOVELY, in Quakers' Dresses, meeting.

Mrs. P. So, now I like thee, Ann; art thou not better without thy monstrous hoop-coat and patches?—If Heaven should make thee so many black spots upon thy face, wou'd it not fright thee, Ann?

Ann L. If it shou'd turn your inside outward, and show all the spots of your hypocrisy, t'would fright me worse!

Mrs. P. My hypocrisy! I scorn thy words, Ann, I lay no baits.

Ann L. If you did, you'd catch no fish.

Mrs. P. Well, well, make thy jests. Thou art corrupted with reading lewd plays, and filthy romances—good for nothing but to lead youth into the high-road of fornication.—Ah! I wish thou art not already too familiar with the wicked ones.

Ann L. Too familiar with the wicked ones? Pray no more of those freedoms, madam—I am familiar with none so wicked as yourself:—How dare you thus talk to me! you, you, you unworthy woman you.
[*Bursts into tears.*]

Enter TRADELOVE.

Trade. What, in tears, Nancy? What have you done to her, Mrs. Prim, to make her weep?

Ann L. Done to me! I wonder I keep my senses among you;—Don't think that I'll be still the fool which you have made me.—No, I'll wear what I please——go when and where I please——and keep what company I think fit, and not what you shall direct——I will.

Trade. For my part, I do think all this very reasonable, Mrs. Lovely—'tis fit you should have your liberty, and for that very purpose I am come.

Enter OBADIAH PRIM, with a Letter in his Hand.

Ob. P. This letter recommendeth a speaker; 'tis from Aminadab Holdfast, of Bristol; peradventure he will be here this night; therefore, Sarah, do thou take care for his reception—— [*Gives her the Letter.*

Mrs. P. I will obey thee. [*Exit.*

Ob. P. What art thou in the dumps for, Ann?

Trade. We must marry her, Mr. Prim.—I have a husband for you, a man that knows how to improve your fortune; one that trades to the four corners of the globe.

Ann L. And would send me for a venture perhaps.

Trade. One that will dress you in all the pride of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America—a Dutch merchant, my girl.

Ob. P. Lookye, it is in vain to talk; when I meet a man worthy of her, she shall have my leave to marry him.

Ann L. Provided he be of the faithful——Was there ever such a swarm of caterpillars to blast the hopes of a woman! [*Aside.*] O, Fainwell! where are thy promises to free me from these vermin? [*Exit.*

Enter AMINADAB, and whispers to PRIM.

Amin. One Simon Pure inquireth for thee.

Ob. P. Friend Tradelove, business requireth my presence.

Trade. O, I shan't trouble you—pox take him for an unmannerly dog—However, I have kept my word with my Dutchman, and will introduce him too for all you. *Exit.*

Enter COLONEL, in a Quaker's Habit.

Ob. P. Friend Pure, thou art welcome; how is it with friend Holdfast, and all friends in Bristol? Timothy Littleworth, John Slenderbrain, and Christopher Keepfaith?

Col. A goodly company! [*Aside.*] They are all in health, I thank thee for them.

Ob. P. Friend Holdfast writes me word, that thou camest lately from Pennsylvania, how do all friends there?

Col. What the devil shall I say? I know just as much of Pennsylvania as I do of Bristol. [*Aside.*

Ob. P. Do they thrive?

Col. Yea, friend, the blessing of their good works fall upon them.

Enter MRS. PRIM, and ANN LOVELY.

Ob. P. Sarah, know our friend Pure.

Mrs. P. Thou art welcome. [*He salutes her.*

Col. Here comes the sum of all my wishes—How charming she appears even in that disguise! [*Aside.*

Ob. P. Why dost thou consider the maiden so attentively, friend?

Col. I will tell thee: about four days ago I saw a vision—This very maiden, but in vain attire, standing on a precipice; and heard a voice, which called me by my name—and bid me put forth my hand and save her from the pit—I did so, and methought the damsel grew unto my side.

Mrs. P. What can that portend?

Ob. P. The damsel's conversion—I am persuaded.

Ann L. That's false, I'm sure—— [*Aside.*

Ob. P. Wilt thou use the means, friend Pure?

Col. Means! What means? Is she not thy daughter, already one of the faithful?

Mrs. P. No, alas! she's one of the ungodly.

Ob. P. Pray thee, mind what this good man will say unto thee; he will teach thee the way that thou shouldest walk, Anne.

Ann L. I know my way without his instruction: I hop'd to have been quiet when once I had put on your odious formality here.

Col. Then thou wearest it out of compulsion, not choice, friend?

Ann L. Thou art in the right of it, friend.——

Mrs. P. Art thou not asham'd to mimic the good man? Ah! thou art a stubborn girl.

Col. Mind her not; she hurteth not me—If thou wilt leave her alone with me, I will discuss some few points with her, that may perchance soften her stubbornness, and melt her into compliance.

Ob. P. Content: I pray thee put it home to her.—Come, Sarah, let us leave the good man with her.

Ann L. [*Catching hold of PRIM, he breaks loose, and exit.*] What do you mean—to leave me with this old enthusiastical canter? Don't think, because I comply'd with your formality, to impose your ridiculous doctrine upon me.

Col. I pray thee, young woman, moderate thy passion.

Ann L. I pray thee walk after thy leader, you will but lose your labour upon me.—These wretches will certainly make me mad!

Col. I am of another opinion; the spirit telleth me I shall convert thee, Ann.

Ann L. 'Tis a lying spirit, don't believe it.

Col. Say'st thou so? Why then thou shalt convert me, my angel. [*Catching her in his Arms.*

Ann L. [*Shrieks.*] Ah! monster, hold off, or I'll tear thy eyes out.

Col. Hush! for Heaven's sake—dost thou not know me? I am Fainwell.

Ann L. Fainwell!

Enter OLD PRIM.

Oh, I'm undone! Prim here—I wish with all my soul I had been dumb.

Ob. P. What is the matter? Why did'st thou shriek out, Ann?

Ann L. Shriek out! I'll shriek and shriek again, cry murder, thieves, or any thing, to drown the noise of that eternal babbler, if you leave me with him any longer.

Ob. P. Was that all? Fie, fie, Ann.

Col. I'll bring down her stomach, I'll warrant thee—Leave us, I pray thee.

Ob. P. Fare thee well:—verily I was afraid the flesh had got the better of the spirit. [*Exit.*

Col. My charming, lovely woman! [*Embraces her.*

Ann L. What mean'st thou by this disguise, Fainwell?

Col. To set thee free, if thou wilt perform thy promise.

Ann L. Make me mistress of my fortune, and make thy own conditions.

Col. This night shall answer all my wishes.—See here, I have the consent of three of thy guardians already, and doubt not but Prim will make the fourth. [*PRIM listening.*

Ob. P. I would gladly hear what arguments the good man useth to bend her. [*Aside.*

Ann L. Thy words give me new life, methinks.

Ob. P. What do I hear? He hath mollified her.—Oh, wonderful conversion!

Col. Ha! Prim listening.—Seem to be edified, and give them hopes that thou wilt turn Quaker, and

leave the rest to me. [*Aloud.*] I am glad to find that thou art touch'd with what I said unto thee, Ann; another time I will explain the other article unto thee; in the mean while, be thou dutiful to our friend Prim.

Ann L. I shall obey thee in every thing.

Enter OBADIAH PRIM.

Ob. P. Oh, what a prodigious change is here!—Thou hast wrought a miracle, friend! Verily, thou dost rejoice me exceedingly, friend; will it please thee to walk into the next room, and refresh thyself—Come, take the maiden by the hand.

Col. We will follow thee.

Enter AMINADAB.

Amin. There is another Simon Pure inquireth for thee, master.

Col. The devil there is. [*Aside.*

Ob. P. Another Simon Pure! I do not know him, is he any relation of thine?

Col. No, friend, I know him not—Pox take him, I wish he were in Pennsylvania again with all my soul. [*Aside.*

Ann L. What shall I do? [*Aside.*

Ob. P. Bring him up.

Col. Humph! then one of us must go down, that's certain—Now impudence assist me.

Enter SIMON PURE.

Ob. P. What is thy will with me, friend?

S. Pu. Didst thou not receive a letter from Aminadab Holdfast, of Bristol, concerning one Simon Pure?

Ob. P. Yea, and Simon Pure is already here, friend.

Col. And Simon Pure will stay here, friend, if it be possible. [*Aside.*

S. Pu. That's an untruth, for I am he.

Col. Take thou heed, friend, what thou dost say ; I do affirm that I am Simon Pure.

S. Pu. Thy name may be Pure, friend, but not that Pure.

Col. Yea, that Pure, which my good friend, Amiadab Holdfast, wrote to my friend Prim about ; the same Simon Pure that came from Pennsylvania, and sojourned in Bristol eleven days ; thou wouldst not take my name from me, wouldst thou ?——till I have done with it. [*Aside.*

S. Pu. Thy name ! I'm astonish'd ?

Col. At what ? at thy own assurance ?

[Going up to him, SIMON PURE starts back.]

S. Pu. Avaunt, Satan, approach me not ; I defy thee and all thy works.

Ann L. Oh, he'll outcant him—Undone, undone for ever. [*Aside.*

Col. Hark thee, friend, thy sham will not take—Don't exert thy voice, thou art too well acquainted with Satan to start at him, thou wicked reprobate—What can thy design be here.

Enter a SERVANT, and gives PRIM a Letter.

Ob. P. One of these must be a counterfeit, but which I cannot say.

Col. What can that letter be ? [*Aside.*

S. Pu. Thou must be the devil, friend, that's certain ; for no human power can stock so great a falsehood.

Ob. P. This letter sayeth that thou art better acquainted with that prince of darkness than any here.—Read that, I pray thee, Simon. *[Gives it the Col.]*

Col. 'Tis Freeman's hand—*[Reads.]* *There is a design formed to rob your house this night, and cut your throat ; and for that purpose there is a man disguised like a Quaker, who is to pass for one Simon Pure ; the gang, whereof I am one, though now resolved to rob no*

more, has been at Bristol; one of them came in the coach with the Quaker, whose name he hath taken; and, from what he hath gathered from him, formed that design, and did not doubt but he should impose so far upon you, as to make you turn out the real Simon Pure, and keep him with you. Make the right use of this. Adieu.—Excellent well!

[*Aside.*

Ob. P. Dost thou hear this? [To S. PURE.

S. Pu. Yea, but it moveth me not; that, doubtless, is the impostor. [Pointing at the COLONEL.

Col. Ah! thou wicked one—now I consider thy face, I remember thou didst come up in the leathern conveniency with me—thou hadst a black bob wig on, and a brown camblet coat with brass buttons—Canst thou deny it, ha?

S. Pu. Yea, I can, and with a safe conscience too, friend.

Ob. P. Verily, friend, thou art the most impudent villain I ever saw.

Ann L. Nay, then I'll have a fling at him.—[*Aside.*] I remember the face of this fellow at Bath—Ay, this is he that pick'd my Lady Raffle's pocket in the Grove—Don't you remember that the mob pump'd you, friend?—This is the most notorious rogue—

S. Pu. What dost provoke thee to seek my life?—Thou wilt not hang me, wilt thou, wrongfully?

Ob. P. She will do thee no hurt, nor thou shalt do me none; therefore get thee about thy business, friend, and leave thy wicked course of life, or thou may'st not come off so favourably every where. Simon, I pray thee put him forth.

Col. Go, friend, I would advise thee, and tempt thy fate no more.

S. Pu. Yea, I will go, but it shall be to thy confusion; for I shall clear myself: I shall return with some proofs that shall convince thee, Obadiah, that thou art highly imposed upon. [Exit.

Col. Then there will be no staying for me, that's certain—What the devil shall I do? [*Aside.*]

Ob. P. What monstrous works of iniquity are there in this world, Simon!

Col. Yea, the age is full of vice——'Sdeath, I am so confounded, I know not what to say. [*Aside.*]

Ob. P. Thou art disorder'd, friend——art thou not well?

Col. My spirit is greatly troubled, and something telleth me, that tho' I have wrought a good work in converting this maiden, this tender maiden, yet my labour will be in vain: for she will, yea, this very damsel will, return again to that abomination from whence I have retriev'd her, as if it were, yea, as if it were out of the jaws of the fiend.

Ob. P. Good lack, thinkest thou so?

Ann L. I must second him. [*Aside.*] What meaneth this struggle within me? I feel the spirit resisteth the vanities of this world, but the flesh is rebellious, yea, the flesh—I greatly fear the flesh and the weakness thereof——hum——

Ob. P. The maid is inspir'd. [*Aside.*] Prodigious! The damsel is filled with the spirit—Sarah.

Enter MRS. PRIM.

Mrs. P. I am greatly rejoiced to see such a change in our beloved Ann. I came to tell thee that supper stayeth for thee.

Col. I am not disposed for thy food, my spirit longeth for more delicious meat!—fain would I redeem this maiden from the tribe of sinners, and break those cords asunder wherewith she is bound—hum——

Ann L. Something whispers in my ears, methinks—that I must be subject to the will of this good man, and from him only must hope for consolation.——

Ob. P. What a revelation is here! My soul rejoiceth, yea, rejoiceth, I say, to find the spirit within thee; for lo, it moveth thee with *natural* agitation

yea, with *natural* agitation, towards this good man—yea, it *stirreth*, as one may say—yea, verily I say it *stirreth* up thy inclination—yea, as one would *stir* a pudding.—Hum.

Ann L. I see, I see! the spirit guiding of thy hand, good Obadiah Prim, and now behold thou art signing thy consent—hum——

Col. And I will take thee in all spiritual love for an helpmate, yea, for the wife of my bosom.

Mrs. P. The spirit hath greatly moved them both, —friend Prim, thou must consent, there's no resisting of the spirit!

Ob. P. Fetch me the pen and ink, Sarah—and my hand shall confess its obedience to the spirit.

Col. I wish it were over.

Enter MRS. PRIM, with Pen and Ink.

Ann L. I tremble lest this quaking rogue should return and spoil all. [*Aside.*

Ob. P. Here, friend, do thou write what the spirit prompteth, and I will sign it. [*Col. sits down.*

Mrs. P. Verily, Ann, it greatly rejoiceth me to see thee reformed from that original wickedness wherein I found thee.

Ann L. I do believe thou art, and I thank thee—

Col. [*Reads.*] *This is to certify all whom it may concern, that I do freely give all my right and title, in Ann Lovely, to Simon Pure, and my full consent that she shall become his wife, according to the form of marriage. Witness my hand.*

Ob. P. That's enough, give me the pen.

[*Signs it.*

Enter BETTY, running to MRS. LOVELY.

Betty. Oh! madam, madam, here's the quaking man again, he has brought a coachman, and two or three more.

Ann L. Ruin'd past redemption! [*Aside to Col.*

Col. No, no, one minute sooner had spoil'd all; but now—here's company coming, friend, give me the paper. [*Going up to PRIM hastily.*]

Ob. P. Here it is, Simon; and I wish thee happy with the maiden.

Ann L. 'Tis done; and now, devil, do thy worst.

Enter SIMON PURE and COACHMAN, &c.

S. Pu. Look thee, friend, I have brought these people to satisfy thee that I am not that impostor which thou didst take me for: this is the man that did drive the leathern conveniency, and brought me from Bristol—and this is——

Col. Lookye, friend, to save the court the trouble of examining witnesses—I plead guilty—ha! ha!

Ob. P. How's this? Is not thy name Pure, then?

Col. No, really, sir; I only made bold with this gentleman's name——but I here give it up safe and sound; it has done the business which I had occasion for, and now I intend to wear my own, which shall be at his service upon the same occasion at any time. —Ha, ha, ha!

S. Pu. Oh! the wickedness of the age!

Ob. P. I am struck dumb with thy impudence. Ann, thou hast deceiv'd me—and perchance undone thyself.

Mrs. P. Thou art a dissembling baggage, and shame will overtake thee. [*Exit.*]

S. Pu. I am grieved to see thy wife so much troubled: I will follow and console her. [*Exit.*]

Enter AMINADAB.

Amin. Thy brother guardians inquire for thee; here is another man with them.

Ann L. Who can that other man be?

[*To the COLONEL.*]

Col. 'Tis one Freeman, a friend of mine, whom I ordered to bring the rest of the guardians here.

Enter SIR PHILIP, TRADELOVE, PERIWINKLE, and
FREEMAN.

Free. [*To the COLONEL.*] Is all safe? did my letter do you service?

Col. All, all's safe! ample service. [*Aside.*

Sir P. Miss Nancy, how dost do, child?

Ann L. Don't call me miss, friend Philip; my name is Ann, thou knowest.

Sir P. What, is the girl metamorphos'd?

Ann L. I wish thou wert so metamorphos'd.—
Ah! Philip, throw off that gaudy attire, and wear the clothes becoming thy age.

Sir P. My age! the woman is possess'd.

Trade. Harkye, Mrs. Lovely, one word with you.

[*Takes hold of her Hand.*

Col. This maiden is my wife, thanks to friend Prim, and thou hast no business with her.

[*Takes her from him.*

Trade. His wife! harkye, Mr. Freeman.

Per. Why, you have made a very fine piece of work of it, Mr. Prim.

Sir P. Married to a Quaker! thou art a fine fellow to be left guardian to an orphan truly——there's a husband for a young lady!

Col. When I have put on my beau clothes, Sir Philip, you'll like me better——

Sir P. Thou wilt make a very scurvy beau——friend——

Col. I believe I can prove it under your hand that you thought me a very fine gentleman in the Park t'other day: will you take a pinch, Sir Philip——One of the finest snuff-boxes you ever saw.

[*Offers him Snuff.*

Sir P. Ha, ha, ha! I am overjoyed, faith, I am, if thou be'st the gentleman——I own I did give my consent to the gentleman I brought here to-day;——but whether this is he I can't be positive.

Ob. P. Canst thou not?—Now, I think thou art a fine fellow to be left guardian to an orphan.

Per. You would have been two rare fellows to have been trusted with the sole management of her fortune; would ye not, think ye? But Mr. Tradelove and myself shall take care of her portion.—

Trade. Ay, ay, so we will—Didn't you tell me the Dutch merchant desired me to meet him here, Mr. Freeman?

Free. I did so; and I am sure he will be here, if you'll have a little patience.

Col. What, is Mr. Tradelove impatient? Nay, then, Ik ben gereet voor you, heb be, Jan Van Timamtirelereletta Heer Van Fainwell, vergeeten!

Trade. Oh! pox of the name! what, have you trick'd me too, Mr. Freeman?

Col. Trick'd, Mr. Tradelove! did not I give you two thousand pounds for your consent fairly? And, now, do you tell a gentleman he has trick'd you?

Per. So, so; you are a pretty guardian, faith, to sell your charge; what, did you look upon her as part of your stock?

Ob. P. Ha, ha, ha! I am glad thy knavery is found out, however—I confess the maiden over-reached me, and I had no sinister end at all.

Per. Ay, ay, one thing or other over-reached you all—but I'll take care he shall never finger a penny of her money, I warrant you;—over-reach'd, quotha! Why, I might have been over-reach'd too, if I had had no more wit: I don't know but this very fellow may be him that was directed to me from Grand Cairo t'other day. Ha, ha, ha!

Col. The very same.

Per. Are you so, sir? but your trick would not pass upon me.—I'm sharp—I'm sharp.

Col. No, as you say, at that time it did not, that was not my lucky hour;—but harkye, sir; I must let you into one secret—you may keep honest John

Tradescant's coat on, for your uncle, Sir Toby Periwinkle, is not dead—so the charge of mourning will be saved, ha, ha, ha!—Don't you remember Mr. Pil-lage, your uncle's steward? Ha, ha, ha!

Per. Not dead! I begin to fear I am trick'd too.

Col. Don't you remember the signing of a lease, Mr. Periwinkle?

Per. Well, and what signifies that lease, if my uncle is not dead?—Ha! I am sure it was a lease I signed.—

Col. Ay, but it was a lease for life, sir, and of this beautiful tenement, I thank you.

[*Taking hold of ANN LOVELY.*

Per. How durst you put this trick upon me, Mr. Freeman? Didn't you tell me my uncle was dying?

Free. And would tell you twice as much to serve my friend, ha, ha!

Sir P. What, the learned and famous Mr. Periwinkle chous'd too!—Ha, ha, ha!—I shall die with laughing, ha, ha, ha!

Ob. P. It had been well if her father had left her to wiser heads than *thine* and *mine*, friends—Ha, ha, ha!

Trade. Well, since you have outwitted us all, pray you, what and who are you, sir?

Sir P. Sir, the gentleman is a fine gentleman.—I am glad you have got a person, madam, who understands dress and good breeding.—I was resolved she should have a husband of my choosing.

Ob. P. I am sorry the maiden has fallen into such hands.

Trade. A beau! nay, then, she is finely help'd up.

Ann L. Why, beaux are great encouragers of trade, sir—Ha, ha, ha!

Col. Lookye, gentlemen—I am the person who can give the best account of myself, and I must beg Sir Philip's pardon, when I tell him, that I have as much aversion to what he calls dress and breeding,

as I have to the enemies of my religion. I have had the honour to serve his majesty, and headed a regiment of the bravest fellows that ever push'd a bayonet in the throat of a Frenchman; and notwithstanding the fortune this lady brings me, whenever my country wants my aid, this sword and arm are at her service.

Therefore, my dear, if thou'lt but deign to smile,
I meet a recompense for all my toil;
Love and religion ne'er admit restraint,
And force makes *many* sinners, not *one* saint;
Still free as air the active mind does rove,
And searches proper objects for its love;
But that once fix'd, 'tis past the pow'r of art
To chase the dear idea from the heart:
'Tis liberty of choice that sweetens life,
Makes the glad *husband*, and the happy *wife*.
[*Exeunt.*]

THE END.

GEORGE BARNWELL;

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

By GEORGE LILLO.

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRES ROYAL,

DRURY LANE AND COVENT GARDEN.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

LONDON:

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REMARKS.

The author of this tragedy was a tradesman, which might influence his taste for the description of scenes in humble life; beyond which, his acquaintance could not extend but in theory.

The popular ballad of "George Barnwell," furnished him with an excellent subject to gratify his inclination, and its moral tendency did just honour to the writer's character, which was that of worth and probity.

Lillo was born in 1693, and was by profession, a jeweller. He lived in London, near Moorgate, in the same neighbourhood where he received his birth: and in the year 1732, having produced this tragedy, he presented it to Mr. Theophilus Cibber, then manager of the summer company at the theatre royal Drury Lane.

Mr. Cibber eagerly accepted this new species of pathetic drama; but, on announcing it for performance, its well-known title, "The true Story of George Barnwell," made a very unfavourable impression upon the refined part of the town, and they

condemned the presumption of the author, in hoping to make them sympathize in the sorrows of any man beneath the rank of an emperor, king, or statesman.

On the first night of representation, the greatest part of the audience assembled to laugh, and brought with them the old ballad on the subject, as a token of ridicule—but, as the play proceeded, they became attentive, then interested, and, at length, threw down the ancient ditty, and drew forth their handkerchiefs.

Pope was amongst the distinguished persons who had the curiosity to be present at the first performance of “George Barnwell,” and he commended the work. He observed, that the fable was well conducted, the diction natural; or if, at times, it was elevated something above the simplicity of the characters, it never descended to meanness, or departed from that truth of style calculated to reach the heart.

The play was performed twenty nights successively on its first appearance, nor did it lose its attraction in the winter season, being frequently acted to crowded houses; and warmly patronised by merchants and other opulent citizens.

Revived notions of elegance in calamity, have, in later times, reduced this play to a mere holiday performance, to warn apprentices and servantmen against the arts of depraved females; and point out to them the inevitable destruction that must ensue, upon the first breach of trust.

In spite of so coarse a moral for refined delinquents, “George Barnwell” is an evening’s entertainment, worthy of the most judicious admirer of the drama,

when C. Kemble performs the character*. Till he represented it, the tragedy was fallen into absolute contempt, by the appearance of actors in Barnwell, whose persons and ages gave not the slightest resemblance of the bashful youth described; and consequently could excite no mercy towards his crimes, no pity for his sufferings.

The difficulty of representing this tragedy, so as to impress every auditor with its value as a dramatic entertainment, exists in procuring an actor who is young enough to look like the merchant's stripling clerk, and yet performer good enough to paint the tumult of various passions which rend his youthful breast.

In a criticism upon this play, in the "*Biographia Dramatica*," it is alleged, that Dr. Samuel Johnson, has given his sentiments upon the question, whether tragedies, in which the plots are taken from domestic life, should be written in metre or prose? wholly against the latter: declaring—"that he could hardly consider a prose tragedy as dramatic."

But it should be recollected, that this opinion was delivered to the writer of a tragedy in prose, (Mr. Edmund Howard, author of "*The Female Gamester*") who brought his manuscript for the doctor's judgment on the work; and it was a far more gentle method of pronouncing condemnation on the performance,—to point out one great and fatal mistake in the author's general plan, than to torture him by exposing a multitude of faults in every species.

* He appeared in the character when he was not older than Barnwell is described to be.

The author of "George Barnwell," died in September, 1739, in the 47th year of his age. On which occasion, the author of "Tom Jones," printed the following character of him in "The Champion."

"He had a perfect knowledge of human nature, though his contempt of all base means of application, which are the necessary steps to great acquaintance, restrained his conversation within very narrow bounds. He had the spirit of an old Roman, joined to a primitive christian. He was content with his little state of life, in which his excellent temper of mind gave him an happiness beyond the power of riches ; and it was necessary for his friends to have a sharp insight into his want of their services, as well as good inclination, and abilities, to serve him. In short, he was one of the best of men, and those who knew him best, will most regret his loss."

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

	DRURY LANE.	COVENT GARDEN.
THOROWGOOD	<i>Mr. Powell.</i>	<i>Mr. Murray.</i>
UNCLE	<i>Mr. Eyre.</i>	<i>Mr. Hull.</i>
GEORGE BARNWELL	<i>Mr. Elliston.</i>	<i>Mr. C. Kemble.</i>
TRUEMAN	<i>Mr. Bartley.</i>	<i>Mr. Claremont.</i>
BLUNT	<i>Mr. Cooke.</i>	<i>Mr. Beverly.</i>
JAILER		<i>Mr. Abbot.</i>
JOHN		<i>Mr. Curtis.</i>
MARIA	<i>Miss Boyce.</i>	<i>Miss Marriot.</i>
MILLWOOD	<i>Mrs. Powell.</i>	<i>Mrs. Litchfield.</i>
LUCY	<i>Mrs. Sparks.</i>	<i>Mrs. Mattocks.</i>

SCENE,—London.

GEORGE BARNWELL.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

A Room in THOROWGOOD's House.

Enter THOROWGOOD and TRUEMAN.

True. Sir, the packet from Genoa is arrived.

[Gives Letters.]

Thor. Heaven be praised ! the storm, that threatened our royal mistress, pure religion, liberty and laws, is for a time diverted. The haughty and revengeful Spaniard, disappointed of the loan on which he depended from Genoa, must now attend the slow returns of wealth from his new world, to supply his empty coffers, ere he can execute his proposed invasion of our happy island. By this means, time is gained to make such preparations on our part, as may, Heaven concurring, prevent his malice, or turn the meditated mischief on himself.

True. He must be insensible indeed, who is not affected when the safety of his country is concerned.—Sir, may I know by what means?—If I am not too bold——

Thor. Your curiosity is laudable, and I gratify it with the greater pleasure, because, from thence you

may learn, how honest merchants, as such, may sometimes contribute to the safety of their country, as they do at all times to its happiness; that if hereafter you should be tempted to any action that has the appearance of vice or meanness in it, upon reflecting on the dignity of our profession, you may, with honest scorn, reject whatever is unworthy of it.

True. Should Barnwell, or I, who have the benefit of your example, by our ill conduct bring any imputation on that honourable name, we must be left without excuse.

Thor. You compliment, young man. [TRUEMAN bows respectfully.] Nay, I am not offended. As the name of merchant never degrades the gentleman, so by no means does it exclude him.—But to answer your question: The bank of Genoa had agreed, at an excessive interest, and on good security, to advance the King of Spain a sum of money sufficient to equip his vast Armada; of which our peerless Elizabeth being well informed, sent Walsingham, her wise and faithful secretary, to consult the merchants of this loyal city; who all agreed to direct their several agents to influence, if possible, the Genoese to break their contract with the Spanish court. 'Tis done: the state and bank of Genoa having maturely weighed, and rightly judged of their true interest, prefer the friendship of the merchants of London to that of the monarch, who proudly styles himself King of both Indies.

True. Happy success of prudent counsels! What an expense of blood and treasure is here saved! Sir, have you any commands for me at this time?

Thor. Only look carefully over the files, to see whether there are any tradesmen's bills unpaid; if there are, send and discharge them. We must not let artificers lose their time, so useful to the public and their families, in unnecessary attendance.

[Exit TRUEMAN.]

Enter MARIA.

Well, Maria, have you given orders for the entertainment? I would have it in some measure worthy the guests. Let there be plenty, and of the best, that the courtiers may at least commend our hospitality.

Mar. Sir, I have endeavoured not to wrong your well-known generosity by an ill-timed parsimony.

Thor. Nay, 'twas a needless caution: I have no cause to doubt your prudence.

Mar. Sir, I find myself unfit for conversation; I should but increase the number of the company, without adding to their satisfaction.

Thor. Nay, my child, this melancholy must not be indulged.

Mar. Company will but increase it: I wish you would dispense with my absence. Solitude best suits my present temper.

Thor. You are not insensible, that it is chiefly on your account these noble lords do me the honour so frequently to grace my board. Should you be absent, the disappointment may make them repent of their condescension, and think their labour lost.

Mar. He, that shall think his time or honour lost in visiting you, can set no real value on your daughter's company, whose only merit is, that she is yours.

Thor. Come, come, Maria, I need not tell you, that a young gentleman may prefer your conversation to mine, and yet intend me no disrespect at all. I remember the time, when the company of the greatest and wisest men in the kingdom would have been insipid and tiresome to me, if it had deprived me of an opportunity of enjoying your mother's.

Mar. Yours, no doubt, was as agreeable to her; for generous minds know no pleasure in society but where 'tis mutual.

Thor. Thou knowest I have no heir, no child, but

thee; the fruits of many years successful industry must all be thine. Now, it would give me pleasure, great as my love, to see on whom you will bestow it. I am daily solicited by men of the greatest rank and merit for leave to address you: but I have hitherto declined it, in hopes that, by observation, I should learn which way your inclination tends; for, as I know love to be essential to happiness in the married state, I had rather my approbation should confirm your choice than direct it.

Mar. What can I say? How shall I answer, as I ought, this tenderness, so uncommon even in the best of parents? But you are without example: yet, had you been less indulgent, I had been most wretched. That I look on the crowd of courtiers that visit here, with equal esteem, but equal indifference, you have observed, and I must needs confess; yet, had you asserted your authority, and insisted on a parent's right to be obeyed, I had submitted, and to my duty sacrificed my peace.

Thor. From your perfect obedience in every other instance, I feared as much; and therefore would leave you without a bias in an affair wherein your happiness is so immediately concerned.

Mar. Whether from a want of that just ambition that would become your daughter, or from some other cause, I know not; but I find high birth and titles don't recommend the man, who owns them, to my affections.

Thor. I would not that they should, unless his merit recommends him more. A noble birth and fortune, though they make not a bad man good, yet they are a real advantage to a worthy one, and place his virtues in the fairest light.

Mar. I cannot answer for my inclinations; but they shall ever be submitted to your wisdom and authority. And as you will not compel me to marry where I cannot love, love shall never make me act

contrary to my duty. Sir, have I your permission to retire?

Thor. I'll see you to your chamber. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.

A Room in MILLWOOD'S House.

MILLWOOD and LUCY discovered.

Mill. How do I look to-day, Lucy?

Lucy. Oh, killingly, madam! A little more red, and you'll be irresistible.—But why this more than ordinary care of your dress and complexion? What new conquest are you aiming at?

Mill. A conquest would be new indeed.

Lucy. Not to you, who make them every day—but to me—Well, 'tis what I'm never to expect—unfortunate as I am—But your wit and beauty—

Mill. First made me a wretch, and still continue me so. Men, however generous or sincere to one another, are all selfish hypocrites in their affairs with us; we are no otherwise esteemed or regarded by them, but as we contribute to their satisfaction.

Lucy. You are certainly, madam, on the wrong side in this argument. Is not the expense all theirs? And I am sure it is our own fault if we have not our share of the pleasure.

Mill. We are but slaves to men.

Lucy. Nay, 'tis they that are slaves, most certainly, for we lay them under contribution.

Mill. Slaves have no property; no, not even in themselves: all is the victor's.

Lucy. You are strangely arbitrary in your principles, madam.

Mill. I would have my conquest complete, like those of the Spaniards in the New World; who first

plundered the natives of all the wealth they had, and then condemned the wretches to the mines for life, to work for more.

Lucy. Well, I shall never approve of your scheme of government: I should think it much more politic, as well as just, to find my subjects an easier employment.

Mill. It is a general maxim among the knowing part of mankind, that a woman without virtue, like a man without honour or honesty, is capable of any action, though ever so vile: and yet what pains will they not take, what arts not use, to seduce us from our innocence, and make us contemptible and wicked, even in their own opinion! Then is it not just, the villains, to their cost, should find us so? But guilt makes them suspicious, and keeps them on their guard; therefore we can take advantage only of the young and innocent part of the sex, who, having never injured women, apprehend no injury from them.

Lucy. Ay, they must be young indeed.

Mill. Such a one, I think, I have found. As I have passed through the city, I have often observed him receiving and paying considerable sums of money; from thence I conclude he is employed in affairs of consequence.

Lucy. Is he handsome?

Mill. Ay, ay, the stripling is well made, and has a good face.

Lucy. About——

Mill. Eighteen.

Lucy. Innocent, handsome, and about eighteen!—You'll be vastly happy. Why, if you manage well, you may keep him to yourself these two or three years.

Mill. If I manage well, I shall have done with him much sooner. Having long had a design on him, and meeting him yesterday, I made a full stop, and gazing wishfully in his face, asked his name. He blushed, and

bowing very low, answered, George Barnwell. I begged his pardon for the freedom I had taken, and told him, that he was the person I had long wished to see, and to whom I had an affair of importance to communicate, at a proper time and place. He named a tavern; I talked of honour and reputation, and invited him to my house. He swallowed the bait, promised to come, and this is the time I expect him.—*[Knocking at the Door.]* Somebody knocks——D'ye hear—I am at home to nobody to-day but him. *[Exit LUCY.]* Less affairs must give way to those of more consequence, and I am strangely mistaken, if this does not prove of great importance to me, and him too, before I have done with him.—Now, after what manner shall I receive him? Let me consider——I'll e'en trust to nature, who does wonders in these matters.

Enter BARNWELL, bowing very low.—LUCY at a Distance.

Mill. Sir, the surprise and joy——

Barn. Madam!

Mill. This is such a favour—— *[Advancing.]*

Barn. Pardon me, madam.

Mill. So unhop'd for! *[Still advances.—BARNWELL salutes her, and retires in Confusion.]* To see you here——Excuse the confusion——

Barn. I fear I am too bold——

Mill. Alas, sir, I may justly apprehend you think me so. Please, sir, to sit. I am as much at a loss how to receive this honour as I ought, as I am surprised at your goodness in conferring it.

Barn. I thought you had expected me: I promised to come.

Mill. That is the more surprising: few men are such religious observers of their word.

Barn. All who are honest are.

Mill. To one another; but we simple women are

seldom thought of consequence enough to gain a place in their remembrance.

[*Laying her Hand on his, as by Accident.*

Barn. Her disorder is so great, she don't perceive she has laid her hand on mine. Heavens! How she trembles!—What can this mean? [*Aside.*

Mill. The interest I have in all that relates to you, (the reason of which you shall know hereafter) excites my curiosity; and were I sure you would pardon my presumption, I should desire to know your real sentiments on a very particular subject.

Barn. Madam, you may command my poor thoughts on any subject, I have none that I would conceal.

Mill. You'll think me bold.

Barn. No, indeed.

Mill. What then are your thoughts of love?

Barn. If you mean the love of women, my youth and circumstances make such thoughts improper in me yet. But if you mean the general love we owe to mankind, I think no one has more of it in his temper than myself. I don't know that person in the world, whose happiness I don't wish, and would not promote, were it in my power. In an especial manner I love my uncle, and my master; but above all, my friend.

Mill. You have a friend, then, whom you love?

Barn. As he does me, sincerely.

Mill. He is, no doubt, often blessed with your company and conversation?

Barn. We live in one house, and both serve the same worthy merchant.

Mill. Happy, happy youth! Whoe'er thou art, I envy thee. What have I lost, by being formed a woman! Had I been a man, I might, perhaps, have been as happy in your friendship, as he who now enjoys it is: but as it is—Oh!—

Barn. I never observed woman before; or this is,

sure, the most beautiful of her sex. [*Aside.*] You seem disordered, madam——May I know the cause?

Mill. Do not ask me——I can never speak it, whatever is the cause. I wish for things impossible. I would be a servant, bound to the same master, to live in one house with you.

Barn. How strange, and yet how kind, her words and actions are! And the effect they have on me is as strange. I must be gone, while I have power to go. [*Aside.*] Madam, I humbly take my leave.

Mill. You will not, sure, leave me so soon!

Barn. Indeed I must.

Mill. You cannot be so cruel! I have prepared a poor supper, at which I promised myself your company.

Barn. I am sorry I must refuse the honour you designed me: but my duty to my master calls me hence. I never yet neglected his service. He is so gentle, and so good a master, that, should I wrong him, though he might forgive me, I should never forgive myself.

Mill. Am I refused, by the first man, the second favour I ever stooped to ask? Go then, thou proud hard-hearted youth; but know, you are the only man that could be found, who would let me sue twice for greater favours.

Barn. What shall I do? How shall I go, or stay?

Mill. Yet do not, do not leave me. I with my sex's pride would meet your scorn; but when I look upon you, when I behold those eyes—Oh! spare my tongue, and let my blushes—this flood of tears too, that will force its way, declare—what woman's modesty should hide.

Barn. Oh, Heavens! she loves me, worthless as I am. Her looks, her words, her flowing tears confess it. And can I leave her then? Oh, never, never! Madam, dry up your tears: you shall command me always; I will stay here for ever, if you would have me.

Lucy. So : she has wheedled him out of his virtue of obedience already, and will strip him of all the rest, one after another, till she has left him as few as her ladyship, or myself.

Mill. Now you are kind, indeed : but I mean not to detain you always : I would have you shake off all slavish obedience to your master ; but you may serve him still.

Lucy. Serve him still ! Ay, or he'll have no opportunity of fingering his cash ; and then he'll not serve your end, I'll be sworn. [*Aside.*]

Enter BLUNT.

Blunt. Madam, supper's on the table.

Mill. Come, sir, you'll excuse all defects. My thoughts were too much employed on my guest, to observe the entertainment.

[*Exeunt BARNWELL and MILLWOOD.*]

Blunt. What ! is all this preparation, this elegant supper, variety of wines, and music, for the entertainment of that young fellow ?

Lucy. So it seems.

Blunt. How ! is our mistress turned fool at last ? She's in love with him, I suppose.

Lucy. I suppose not. But she designs to make him in love with her, if she can.

Blunt. What will she get by that ? He seems under age, and can't be supposed to have much money.

Lucy. But his master has, and that's the same thing, as she'll manage it.

Blunt. I don't like this fooling with a handsome young fellow : while she's endeavouring to ensnare him, she may be caught herself.

Lucy. Nay, were she like me, that would certainly be the consequence ; for, I confess, there is something in youth and innocence that moves me mightily.

Blunt. Yes ; so does the smoothness and plumpness

of a partridge move a mighty desire in the hawk to be the destruction of it.

Lucy. Why, birds are their prey, and men are ours; though, as you observed, we are sometimes caught ourselves. But that, I dare say, will never be the case of our mistress.

Blunt. I wish it may prove so; for you know we all depend upon her. Should she trifle away her time with a young fellow that there's nothing to be got by, we must all starve.

Lucy. There's no danger of that; for I am sure she has no view in this affair but interest.

Blunt. Well, and what hopes are there of success in that?

Lucy. The most promising that can be. 'Tis true the youth has his scruples; but she'll soon teach him to answer them, by stifling his conscience. Oh, the lad is in a hopeful way, depend upon't. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

BARNWELL and MILLWOOD discovered at Supper.

Music.—After which they come forward.

Barn. What can I answer? All that I know is, that you are fair, and I am miserable.

Mill. We are both so, and yet the fault is in ourselves.

Barn. To ease our present anguish, by plunging into guilt, is to buy a moment's pleasure with an age of pain.

Mill. I should have thought the joys of love as lasting as they are great: if ours prove otherwise, 'tis your inconstancy must make them so.

Barn. The law of Heaven will not be reversed, and that requires us to govern our passions.

Mill. To give us sense of beauty and desires, and yet forbid us to taste and be happy, is a cruelty to nature. Have we passions only to torment us?

Barn. To hear you talk, though in the cause of vice; to gaze upon your beauty, and press your hand, inflames my wishes; yet, for a moment's guilty pleasure, shall I lose my innocence, my peace of mind, and hopes of solid happiness?

Mill. Chimeras all!

Barn. I would not——yet must on—— [Exit.

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

A Room in THOROWGOOD'S House.

Enter BARNWELL.

Barn. How strange are all things round me! Like some thief, who treads forbidden ground, and fain would lurk unseen, fearful I enter each apartment of this well-known house. To guilty love, as if that were too little, already have I added breach of trust——A thief!——Can I know myself that wretched thing, and look my honest friend and injured master in the face? Though hypocrisy may a while conceal my guilt, at length it will be known, and public shame and ruin must ensue. In the mean time, what must be my life? Ever to speak a language foreign to my heart; hourly to add to the number of my crimes, in

GEORGE BARNWELL



BARNWELL. — TO GAZE UPON YOUR BEAUTY AND
PRESS YOUR HAND INFLAMES MY WISHES.
ACT. I. — SCENE. III.

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order to conceal them! Sure such was the condition of the grand apostate, when first he lost his purity. Like me, disconsolate he wandered; and while yet in heaven, bore all his future hell about.

Enter TRUEMAN.

True. Barnwell, Oh, how I rejoice to see you safe! so will our master and his gentle daughter; who, during your absence, often inquired after you.

Barn. Would he were gone! his officious love will pry into the secrets of my soul. [*Aside.*

True. Unless you knew the pain the whole family has felt on your account, you can't conceive how much you are beloved. But why thus cold and silent? When my heart is full of joy for your return, why do you turn away? why thus avoid me? What have I done? how am I altered since you saw me last? Or rather, what have you done? and why are you thus changed? for I am still the same?

Barn. What have I done indeed! [*Aside.*

True. Not speak!—nor look upon me!—

Barn. By my face he will discover all I would conceal; methinks already I begin to hate him. [*Aside.*

True. I cannot bear this usage from a friend; one whom till now I ever found so loving; whom yet I love; though this unkindness strikes at the root of friendship, and might destroy it in any breast but mine.

Barn. I am not well. [*Turning to him.*] Sleep has been a stranger to these eyes since you beheld them last.

True. Heavy they look indeed, and swoln with tears; now they overflow. Rightly did my sympathising heart forebode last night, when thou wast absent, something fatal to our peace.

Barn. Your friendship engages you too far. My

troubles, whate'er they are, are mine alone : you have no interest in them, nor ought your concern for me give you a moment's pain.

True. You speak as if you knew of friendship nothing but the name. Before I saw your grief, I felt it. Since we parted last, I have slept no more than you ; but pensive in my chamber sat alone, and spent the tedious night in wishes for your safety and return : e'en now, though ignorant of the cause, your sorrow wounds me to the heart.

Barn. 'Twill not be always thus. Friendship and all engagements cease as circumstances and occasions vary ; and since you once may hate me, perhaps it might be better for us both that now you loved me less.

True. Sure I but dream ! Without a cause would Barnwell use me thus ? Ungenerous and ungrateful youth, farewell ; I shall endeavour to follow your advice. [*Going.*] Yet stay, perhaps, I am too rash, and angry, when the cause demands compassion. Some unforeseen calamity may have befallen him, too great to bear.

Barn. What part am I reduced to act ? 'Tis vile and base to move his temper thus, the best of friends and men.

True. I am to blame ; pr'ythee, forgive me, Barnwell. Try to compose your ruffled mind ; and let me know the cause that thus transports you from yourself ; my friendly counsel may restore your peace.

Barn. All, that is possible for man to do for man, your generous friendship may effect ; but here even that's in vain.

True. Something dreadful is labouring in your breast ; oh, give it vent, and let me share your grief ; 'twill ease your pain, should it admit no cure, and make it lighter by the part I bear.

Barn. Vain supposition ! my woes increase by being

observed ; should the cause be known, they would exceed all bounds.

True. So well I know thy honest heart, guilt cannot harbour there.

Barn. Oh, torture insupportable ! *[Aside.*

True. Then why am I excluded ? Have I a thought I would conceal from you ?

Barn. If still you urge me on this hated subject, I'll never enter more beneath this roof, nor see your face again.

True. 'Tis strange——but I have done ; say but you hate me not.

Barn. Hate you ! I am not that monster yet.

True. Shall our friendship shall continue ?

Barn. It's a blessing I never was worthy of ; yet now must stand on terms ; and but upon conditions can confirm it.

True. What are they ?

Barn. Never hereafter, though you should wonder at my conduct, desire to know more than I am willing to reveal.

True. 'Tis hard ; but upon any conditions I must be your friend.

Barn. Then, as much as one lost to himself can be another's I am yours. *[Embracing.*

True. Be ever so, and may Heaven restore your peace ! But business requires our attendance ; business, the youth's best preservative from ill, as idleness his worst of snares. Will you go with me ?

Barn. I'll take a little time to reflect on what has past, and follow you. *[Exit TRUUMAN.]* I might have trusted Trueman, and engaged him to apply to my uncle, to repair the wrong I have done my master : but what of Millwood ? shall I leave her, for ever leave her, and not let her know the cause ? She, who loves me with such a boundless passion ! Can cruelty be duty ? I judge of what she then must feel, by what I now endure.

Enter THOROWGOOD.

Thor. Without a cause assigned, or notice given, to absent yourself last night, was a fault, young man, and I came to chide you for it, but hope I am prevented. That modest blush, the confusion so visible in your face, speak grief and shame. When we have offended Heaven, it requires no more; and shall man, who needs himself to be forgiven, be harder to appease? If my pardon or love be of moment to your peace, look up secure of both.

Barn. This goodness has o'ercome me. [*Aside.*] Oh, sir, you know not the nature and extent of my offence; and I should abuse your mistaken bounty to receive it. Though I had rather die than speak my shame; though racks could not have forced the guilty secret from my breast, your kindness has.

Thor. Enough, enough, whatever it be; this concern shows you're convinced, and I am satisfied. How painful is the sense of guilt, to an ingenuous mind? Some youthful folly, which it were prudent not to inquire into.

Barn. It will be known, and you'll recall your pardon, and abhor me.

Thor. I never will. Yet be upon your guard in this gay thoughtless season of your life; when vice becomes habitual, the very power of leaving it is lost.

Barn. Hear me, on my knees, confess——

Thor. Not a syllable more upon this subject; it were not mercy, but cruelty, to hear what must give you such torment to reveal.

Barn. This generosity amazes and distracts me.

Thor. This remorse makes thee dearer to me than if thou hadst never offended. Whatever is your fault, of this I am certain, 'twas harder for you to offend, than me to pardon. [*Exit THOROWGOOD.*]

Barn. Villain, villain, villain! basely to wrong so excellent a man. Should I again return to folly!—

Detested thought!—But what of Millwood then?—Why, I renounce her;—I give her up——The struggle's over, and virtue has prevailed. Reason may convince, but gratitude compels. This unlooked-for generosity has saved me from destruction. [*Going.*]

Enter a FOOTMAN.

Foot. Sir, two ladies from your uncle in the country desire to see you.

Barn. Who should they be. [*Aside.*] Tell them I'll wait upon them. [*Exit FOOTMAN.*] Methinks I dread to see them.—Now every thing alarms me.—Guilt, what a coward hast thou made me! [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

Another Room in THOROWGOOD'S House.

Enter MILLWOOD, LUCY, and a FOOTMAN.

Foot. Ladies, he'll wait upon you immediately.

Mill. 'Tis very well.—I thank you.

[*Exit FOOTMAN.*]

Enter BARNWELL.

Barn. Confusion! Millwood!

Mill. That angry look tells me that here I am an unwelcome guest; I feared as much: the unhappy are so every where.

Barn. Will nothing but my utter ruin content you?

Mill. Unkind and cruel! Lost myself, your happiness is now my only care.

Barn. How did you gain admission?

Mill. Saying we were desired by your uncle to visit, and deliver a message to you, we were received

by the family without suspicion, and with much respect conducted here.

Barn. Why did you come at all?

Mill. I never shall trouble you more. I'm come to take my leave for ever. Such is the malice of my fate: I go hopeless, despairing ever to return. This hour is all I have left: one short hour is all I have to bestow on love and you, for whom I thought the longest life too short.

Barn. Then we are met to part for ever?

Mill. It must be so. Yet think not that time or absence shall ever put a period to my grief, or make me love you less. Though I must leave you, yet condemn me not.

Barn. Condemn you! No, I approve your resolution, and rejoice to hear it; 'Tis just——'tis necessary,——I have well weighed, and found it so.

Lucy. I am afraid the young man has more sense than she thought he had. [Aside.]

Barn. Before you came, I had determined never to see you more.

Mill. Confusion! [Aside.]

Lucy. Ay, we are all out; this is a turn so unexpected, that I shall make nothing of my part; they must e'en play the scene betwixt themselves. [Aside.]

Mill. 'Twas some relief to think, though absent, you would love me still; but to find *you* had resolved to cast me off——This, as I never could expect, I have not learnt to bear.

Barn. I am sorry to hear you blame me in a resolution that so well becomes us both.

Mill. I have reason for what I do, but you have none.

Barn. Can we want a reason for parting, who have so many to wish we never had met?

Mill. Look on me, Barnwell. Am I deformed, or old? Nay, look again; am I not she whom yesterday you thought the fairest and the kindest of her sex?

Barn. No more: let me repent my former fol-

lies, if possible, without remembering what they were.

Mill. Why ?

Barn. Such is my frailty, that 'tis dangerous.

Mill. Where is the danger, since we are to part ?

Barn. The thought of that already is too painful.

Mill. If it be painful to part, then I may hope, at least, you do not hate me ?

Barn. No——no——I never said I did——Oh, my heart !

Mill. Perhaps you pity me ?

Barn. I do——I do——Indeed I do.

Mill. You'll think upon me ?

Barn. Doubt it not, while I can think at all.

Mill. You may judge an embrace at parting too great a favour——though it would be the last. [*He draws back.*] A look shall then suffice——Farewell——for ever. [*Exeunt MILLWOOD and LUCY.*]

Barn. If to resolve to suffer, be to conquer,——I have conquered——Painful victory !

Enter MILLWOOD and LUCY.

Mill. One thing I had forgot ;——I never must return to my own house again. This I thought proper to let you know, lest your mind should change, and you should seek in vain to find me there. Forgive me this second intrusion ; I only came to give you this caution, and that, perhaps, was needless.

Barn. I hope it was ; yet it is kind, and I must thank you for it.

Mill. My friend, your arm. [*To LUCY.*] Now, I am gone for ever. [*Going.*]

Barn. One thing more——Sure there's no danger in my knowing where you go ? If you think otherwise——

Mill. Alas ! [*Weeping.*]

Lucy. We are right, I find ; that's my cue. [*Aside.*] Ah, dear sir, she's going she knows not whither ; but go she must.

Barn. Humanity obliges me to wish you well : why will you thus expose yourself to needless troubles ?

Lucy. Nay, there's no help for it : she must quit town immediately, and the kingdom as soon as possible. It was no small matter, you may be sure, that could make her resolve to leave you.

Mill. No more, my friend ; since he, for whose dear sake alone I suffer, and am content to suffer, is kind and pities me ; where'er I wander through wilds and deserts, benighted and forlorn, that thought shall give me comfort.

Barn. For my sake !—Oh tell me how, which way am I so curs'd, to bring such ruin on thee ?

Mill. No matter ; I am contented with my lot.

Barn. How, how am I the cause of your undoing ?

Mill. To know it, will but increase your troubles.

Barn. My troubles can't be greater than they are.

Lucy. Well, well, sir, if she won't satisfy you, I will.

Barn. I am bound to you beyond expression.

Mill. Remember, sir, that she desired you not to hear it.

Barn. Begin, and ease my racking expectation.

Lucy. Why, you must know, my lady here was an only child, and her parents dying while she was young, left her and her fortune (no inconsiderable one, I assure you) to the care of a gentleman who has a good estate of his own.

Mill. Ay, ay, the barbarous man is rich enough ; but what are riches, when compared to love ?

Lucy. For a while he performed the office of a faithful guardian, settled her in a house, hired her servants.—But you have seen in what manner she lived, so I need say no more of that.

Mill. How I shall live hereafter, Heaven knows !

Lucy. All things went on as one could wish ; till some time ago, his wife dying, he fell violently in love

with his charge, and would fain have married her. Now the man is neither old or ugly, but a good personable sort of a man, but I don't know how it was, she could never endure him. In short, her ill usage so provoked him, that he brought in an account of his executorship, wherein he makes her debtor to him.——

Mill. A trifle in itself, but more than enough to ruin me, whom, by this unjust account, he had stripped of all before.

Lucy. Now, she having neither money nor friend, except me, who am as unfortunate as herself, he compelled her to pass his accounts, and give bond for the sum he demanded ; but still provided handsomely for her, and continued his courtship, till being informed by his spies (truly I suspect some in her own family) that you were entertained at her house, and staid with her all night, he came this morning, raving and storming like a madman, talks no more of marriage (so there's no hope of making up matters that way), but vows her ruin, unless she'll allow him the same favour that he supposes she granted you.

Barn. Must she be ruined, or find her refuge in another's arms ?

Mill. He gave me but an hour to resolve in ; that's happily spent with you—— and now I go——

Barn. To be expos'd to all the rigours of the various seasons ; the summer's parching heat, and winter's cold ? unhoused, to wander friendless, through the inhospitable world, in misery and want ; attended with fear and danger, and pursued by malice and revenge. Would'st thou endure all this for me, and can I do nothing, nothing, to prevent it ?

Lucy. 'Tis really a pity there can be no way found out.

Barn. Oh, where are all my resolutions now ?

Lucy. Now I advised her, sir, to comply with the gentleman.

Barn. Tormenting fiend, away ! I had rather perish, nay, see her perish, than have her saved by him. I will myself prevent her ruin, though with my own. A moment's patience : I'll return immediately.

[*Exit BARNWELL.*]

Lucy. 'Twas well you came, or, by what I can perceive, you had lost him.

Mill. That, I must confess, was a danger I did not foresee ; I was only afraid he should have come without money. You know, a house of entertainment ; like mine, is not kept without expense.

Lucy. That's very true ; but then you should be reasonable in your demands ; 'tis pity to discourage a young man.

Mill. Leave that to me.

Enter BARNWELL, with a Bag of Money.

Barn. What am I about to do ? Now you, who boast your reason all sufficient, suppose yourselves in my condition, and determine for me ; whether 'tis right to let her suffer for my faults, or, by this small addition to my guilt, prevent the ill effects of what is past.

Lucy. These young sinners think every thing in the ways of wickedness so strange !——But I could tell him, that this is nothing but what's very common ; for one vice as naturally begets another, as a father a son. But he'll find out that himself, if he lives long enough.

[*Aside.*]

Barn. Here, take this, and with it purchase your deliverance. Return to your house, and live in peace and safety.

Mill. So, I may hope to see you there again ?

Barn. Answer me not, but fly, lest, in the agonies of my remorse, I take again what is not mine to give, and abandon thee to want and misery.

Mill. Say but you'll come.

Barn. You are my fate, my heaven or my hell ;

only leave me now, dispose of me hereafter as you please. [*Exeunt MILLWOOD and LUCY.*] What have I done? Were my resolutions founded on reason, and sincerely made? Why then has Heaven suffered me to fall? I sought not the occasion; and if my heart deceives me not, compassion and generosity were my motives. But why should I attempt to reason? All is confusion, horror, and remorse. I find I am lost, cast down from all my late-erected hope, and plunged again in guilt, yet scarce know how or why.

Such undistinguish'd horrors make my brain,
Like hell, the seat of darkness and of pain. [*Exit.*]

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

A Room in THOROWGOOD'S House.

THOROWGOOD and TRUEMAN discovered (*with Account Books*) sitting at a Table.

Thor. Are Barnwell's accounts ready for my inspection? He does not use to be the last on these occasions.

True. Upon receiving your orders, he retired, I thought in some confusion. If you please, I'll go and hasten him. I hope he has not been guilty of any neglect.

Thor. I'm now going to the Exchange; let him know, at my return I expect to find him ready.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter MARIA, with a Book.—Sits and reads.

Mar. How forcible is truth ! The weakest mind, inspired with love of that, fixed and collected in itself, with indifference beholds the united force of earth and hell opposing. Such souls are raised above the sense of pain, or so supported that they regard it not. The martyr cheaply purchases his heaven ; small are his sufferings, great is his reward. Not so the wretch who combats love with duty ; whose mind, weakened and dissolved by the soft passion, feeble and hopeless, opposes his own desires——What is an hour, a day, a year of pain, to a whole life of tortures such as these ?

Enter TRUEMAN.

True. Oh, Barnwell ! Oh, my friend ! how art thou fallen !

Mar. Ha ! Barnwell ! What of him ? Speak, say, what of Barnwell ?

True. 'Tis not to be concealed : I've news to tell of him, that will afflict your generous father, yourself, and all who know him.

Mar. Defend us, Heaven !

True. I cannot speak it. See there.

[Gives a Letter.]

Mar. *[Reads.]* *I know my absence will surprise my honoured master and yourself ; and the more, when you shall understand that the reason of my withdrawing, is my having embezzled part of the cash with which I was entrusted. After this, 'tis needless to inform you, that I intend never to return again. Though this might have been known, by examining my accounts, yet to prevent that unnecessary trouble, and to cut off all fruitless expectations of my return, I have left this from the lost*

GEORGE BARNWELL.

True. Lost indeed ! Yet how he should be guilty of what he there charges himself withal, raises my wonder equal to my grief. Never had youth a higher sense of virtue. Justly he thought, and as he thought he practised ! never was life more regular than his.—An understanding uncommon at his years, an open, generous manliness of temper, his manners easy, unaffected, and engaging.

Mar. This, and much more you might have said with truth. He was the delight of every eye, and joy of every heart that knew him.

True. Since such he was, and was my friend, can I support his loss ! See, the fairest, happiest maid this wealthy city boasts, kindly condescends to weep for thy unhappy fate, poor, ruined Barnwell !

Mar. Trueman, do you think a soul so delicate as his, so sensible of shame, can e'er submit to live a slave to vice ?

True. Never, never. So well I know him, I'm sure this act of his, so contrary to his nature, must have been caused by some unavoidable necessity.

Mar. Are there no means yet to preserve him ?

True. Oh that there were ! but few men recover their reputation lost ; a merchant never. Nor would he, I fear, though I should find him, ever be brought to look his injured master in the face.

Mar. I fear as much ; and therefore would never have my father know it.

True. That's impossible.

Mar. What's the sum ?

True. 'Tis considerable ; I've marked it here, to show it, with the letter, to your father, at his return.

Mar. If I should supply the money, could you so dispose of that and the account, as to conceal this unhappy mismanagement from my father ?

True. Nothing more easy. But can you intend it ! —Will you save a helpless wretch from ruin ?—Oh,

'twere an act worthy such exalted virtue as Maria's; Sure Heaven, in mercy to my friend, inspired the generous thought.

Mar. Doubt not but I would purchase so great a happiness at a much dearer price. But how shall he be found?

True. Trust to my diligence for that. In the mean time, I'll conceal his absence from your father, or find such excuses for it, that the real cause shall never be suspected.

Mar. In attempting to save from shame, one whom we hope may yet return to virtue, to Heaven and you, the only witnesses of this action, I appeal, whether I do any thing misbecoming my sex and character.

True. Earth must approve the deed, and Heaven, I doubt not, will reward it.

Mar. If Heaven approves it, I am well rewarded. A virgin's fame is sullied by suspicion's lightest breath; and, therefore, as this must be a secret from my father and the world, for Barnwell's sake, for mine, let it be so to him. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Room in MILLWOOD'S House.

Enter LUCY and BLUNT.

Lucy. Well, what do you think of Millwood's conduct now? Her artifice, in making him rob his master at first, and the various stratagems by which she has obliged him to continue that course, astonish even me, who know her so well. Being called by his master to make up the accounts, he was forced to

quit his house and service, and wisely flies to Millwood for relief and entertainment.

Blunt. How did she receive him?

Lucy. As you would expect. She wondered what he meant, was astonished at his impudence, and, with an air of modesty peculiar to herself, swore so heartily that she never saw him before, that she put me out of countenance.

Blunt. That's much indeed! But how did Barnwell behave?

Lucy. He grieved; and at length, enraged at this barbarous treatment, was preparing to be gone; and making towards the door, showed a sum of money, which he had brought from his master's, the last he is ever likely to have from thence.

Blunt. But then, Millwood——

Lucy. Ay, she, with her usual address, returned to her old arts of lying, swearing, and dissembling; hung on his neck, wept, and swore 'twas meant in jest.—The amorous youth melted into tears, threw the money into her lap, and swore he had rather die than think her false.

Blunt. Strange infatuation!

Lucy. Just then, when every passion with lawless anarchy prevailed, and reason was in the raging tempest lost, the cruel, artful Millwood prevailed upon the wretched youth to promise——what I tremble but to think of.

Blunt. I am amazed! What can it be?

Lucy. You will be more so, to hear, it is to attempt the life of his nearest relation, and best benefactor.

Blunt. His uncle! whom we have often heard him speak of as a gentleman of a large estate, and fair character, in the country where he lives?

Lucy. The same. She was no sooner possessed of the last dear purchase of his ruin; but her avarice, insatiate as the grave, demanded his horrid sacrifice: Barnwell's near relation, his uncle, whose blood must

seal the dreadful secret, and prevent the terrors of her guilty fears.

Blunt. Is it possible she could persuade him to do an act like that?

Lucy. 'Tis true, at the naming of the murder of his uncle, he started into rage; and, breaking from her arms (where she till then had held him with well dissembled love, and false endearments,) called her cruel, monster, devil, and told her she was born for his destruction. She thought it not for her purpose to meet his rage with her rage, but affected a most passionate fit of grief, railed at her fate, and cursed her wayward stars, that still her wants should force her to press him to act such deeds, as she must needs abhor as well as he. She told him necessity had no law, and love no bounds; that therefore he never truly loved, but meant, in her necessity, to forsake her. Then she kneeled, and swore, that since by his refusal he had given her cause to doubt his love, she never would see him more, unless, to prove it true, he robbed his uncle, to supply her wants, and murdered him, to keep it from discovery.

Blunt. I am astonished! there is something so horrid in murder, that all other crimes seem nothing, when compared to that: I would not be involved in the guilt of it for all the world.

Lucy. Nor I, Heaven knows. Therefore let us clear ourselves, by doing all that is in our power to prevent it. I have just thought of a way that to me seems probable. Will you join with me to detect this cursed design?

Blunt. With all my heart. He, who knows of a murder intended to be committed, and does not discover it, in the eye of the law and reason, is a murderer.

Lucy. Let us lose no time; I'll acquaint you with the particulars as we go.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

A Walk at some Distance from a Country Seat.

Enter BARNWELL.

Barn. A dismal gloom obscures the face of day. Either the sun has slipped behind a cloud, or journeys round the west of heaven with more than common speed, to avoid the sight of what I am doomed to act. Since I set forth on this accurs'd design, where'er I tread methinks, the solid earth trembles beneath my feet. *Murder my uncle!*—my father's only brother, and who since his death has been to me a father; that took me up an infant and an orphan, reared me with tenderest care, and still indulged me with most paternal fondness! Yet here I stand his destined murderer—I stiffen with horror at my own impiety——'Tis yet unperformed——What if I quit my bloody purpose, and fly the place? [*Going, then stops.*]*—*But whither, oh, whither shall I fly? My master's once friendly doors are for ever shut against me; and without money, Millwood will never see me more; and she has got such firm possession of my heart, and governs there with such despotic sway, that life is not to be endured without her. Ay, there's the cause of all my sin and sorrow: 'tis more than love; it is the fever of the soul, and madness of desire. In vain does nature, reason, conscience, all oppose it; the impetuous passion bears down all before it, and drives me on to lust, to theft, and murder. Oh, conscience, feeble guide to virtue, thou only show'st

us when we go astray, but wantest power to stop us in our course !——Ha ! in yonder shady walk I see my uncle——He's alone——Now for my disguise. [*Plucks out a Mask.*]——This is his hour of private meditation. Thus daily he prepares his soul for Heaven ; while I——But what have I to do with heaven ? Ha ! no struggles, conscience——

Hence, hence remorse, and every thought that's good ;

The storm, that lust began, must end in blood.

[*Puts on the Mask, draws a Pistol, and exit.*]

Enter UNCLE.

Unc. If I were superstitious, I should fear some danger lurked unseen, or death were nigh.——A heavy melancholy clouds my spirits. My imagination is filled with ghastly forms of dreary graves, and bodies changed by death ; when the pale lengthened visage attracts each weeping eye, and fills the musing soul at once with grief and horror, pity and aversion.——I will indulge the thought. The wise man prepares himself for death, by making it familiar to his mind. When strong reflections hold the mirror near, and the living in the dead behold their future self, how does each inordinate passion and desire cease, or sicken at the view ! The mind scarce moves ; the blood, curdling and chilled, creeps slowly through the veins : fixed, still, and motionless we stand, so like the solemn object of our thoughts, we are almost at present what we must be hereafter ; till curiosity awakes the soul, and sets it on inquiry.

Enter BARNWELL at a Distance.

Oh, death ! thou strange mysterious power, seen every day, yet never understood, but by the incom-

municative dead, what art thou? The extensive mind of man, that with a thought circles the earth's vast globe, sinks to the centre, or ascends above the stars; that worlds exotic finds, or thinks it finds, thy thick clouds attempts to pass in vain; lost and bewildered in the horrid gloom, defeated, she returns more doubtful than before, of nothing certain but of labour lost.

[*During this Speech, BARNWELL sometimes presents the Pistol, and draws it back again.*

Barn. Oh! 'tis impossible.

[*Throwing down the Pistol.—UNCLE starts, and attempts to draw his Sword.*

Unc. A man so near me! armed and masked!

Barn. Nay then, there's no retreat.

[*Plucks a Poignard from his Bosom, and stabs him.*

Unc. All gracious Heaven, regard the prayer of thy dying servant; bless, with the choicest blessings, my dearest nephew; forgive my murderer, and take my fleeting soul to endless mercy.

[*BARNWELL throws off his Mask, runs to him, and kneeling by him, raises and chafes him.*

Barn. Expiring saint! Oh, murdered, martyred uncle! lift up your dying eyes, and view your nephew in your murderer—Oh, do not look so tenderly upon me!—Let indignation lighten from your eyes, and blast me ere you die.—By Heaven, he weeps, in pity of my woes.—Tears, tears, for blood!—The murdered, in the agonies of death, weeps for his murderer.—Oh, speak your pious purpose; pronounce my pardon then, and take me with you—He would, but cannot—Oh, why, with such fond affection, do you press my murdering hand?— [*Uncle sighs and dies.*]—Life, that hovered on his lips but till he had sealed my pardon, in that sigh expired.—He's gone for ever,—Do I still breathe, and taint with my infectious breath the

wholesome air?—Let Heaven from its high throne, in justice or in mercy, now look down on that dear murdered saint, and me the murderer, and if his vengeance spares, let pity strike and end my wretched being.—Murder, the worst of crimes, and parricide the worst of murders, and this the worst of parricides.—

Oh, may it ever stand alone accurst,
The last of murders, as it is the worst. [Exit.

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

A Room in THOROWGOOD'S House.

Enter MARIA, meeting TRUEMAN.

Mar. What news of Barnwell ?

True. None ; I have sought him with the greatest diligence, but all in vain.

Mar. Does my father yet suspect the cause of his absence ?

True. All appeared so just and fair to him, it is not possible he ever should ; but his absence will no longer be concealed. Your father is wise ; and though he seems to hearken to the friendly excuses I would make for Barnwell, yet I am afraid he regards them only as such, without suffering them to influence his judgment.

Enter THOROWGOOD and LUCY.

Thor. This woman here has given me a sad, and, 'bating some circumstances, too probable an account of Barnwell's defection.

Lucy. I am sorry, sir, that my frank confession of my former unhappy course of life should cause you to suspect my truth on this occasion.

Thor. It is not that ; your confession has in it all the appearance of truth. Among many other particulars, she informs me, that Barnwell has been influenced to break his trust, and wrong me at several times of considerable sums of money. Now, as I know this to be false, I would fain doubt the whole of her relation, too dreadful to be willingly believed.

Mar. Sir, your pardon ; I find myself on a sudden so indisposed that I must retire. Poor ruined Barnwell ! Wretched, lost Maria ! [*Aside.—Exit.*]

Thor. Oh, Trueman, this person informs me, that your friend, at the instigation of an impious woman, is gone to rob and murder his venerable uncle.

True. Oh, execrable deed ! I am blasted with the horror of the thought.

Lucy. This delay may ruin all.

Thor. What to do or think, I know not. That he ever wronged me, I know is false ; the rest may be so too ; there's all my hope.

True. Trust not to that : rather suppose all true, than lose a moment's time. Even now the horrid deed may be doing—dreadful imagination !——or it may be done, and we be vainly debating on the means to prevent what is already past.

Thor. This earnestness convinces me, that he knows more than he has yet discovered. What, ho ! without there ! who waits ?

Enter a SERVANT.

Order the groom to saddle the swiftest horse, and prepare to set out with speed; an affair of life and death demands his diligence. [*Exit SERVANT.*] For you, whose behaviour on this occasion I have no time to commend as it deserves, return, and observe this Millwood, till I come. I have your directions. [*Exit LUCY.*] Trueman, you, I am sure, will not be idle on this occasion. [*Exit THOROWGOOD.*]

True. He only, who is a friend, can judge of my distress. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

MILLWOOD'S *House.*

Enter MILLWOOD.

Mill. I wish I knew the event of his design. The attempt, without success, would ruin him. Well; what have I to apprehend from that? I fear too much. The mischief being only intended, his friends, through pity of his youth, turn all their rage on me. I should have thought of that before. Suppose the deed done; then, and then only, I shall be secure.—Or what if he returns without attempting it at all!—

Enter BARNWELL, bloody.

But he is here, and I have done him wrong. His bloody hands show he has done the deed, but show he wants the prudence to conceal it.

Barn. Where shall I hide me? Whither shall I fly, to avoid the swift unerring hand of justice?

Mill. Dismiss your fears: though thousands had pursued you to the door, yet being entered here, you

are as safe as innocence. I have a cavern, by art so cunningly contrived, that the piercing eyes of jealousy and revenge may search in vain, nor find the entrance to the safe retreat. There will I hide you, if any danger's near.

Barn. Oh, hide me—from myself, if it be possible; for while I bear my conscience in my bosom, though I were hid where man's eye never saw, nor light e'er dawned, 'twere all in vain. For, oh, that inmate, that impartial judge, will try, convict, and sentence me for murder, and execute me with never-ending torments. Behold these hands, all crimsoned o'er with my dear uncle's blood. Here's a sight to make a statue start with horror, or turn a living man into a statue!

Mill. Ridiculous! Then it seems you are afraid of your own shadow, or, what's less than a shadow, your conscience.

Barn. Though to man unknown I did the accursed act, what can we hide from Heaven's all-seeing eye?

Mill. No more of this stuff. What advantage have you made of his death? or what advantage may yet be made of it? Did you secure the keys of his treasure, which, no doubt, were about him? What gold, what jewels, or what else of value have you brought me?

Barn. Think you I added sacrilege to murder?—Oh, had you seen him as his life flowed from him in a crimson flood, and heard him praying for me, by the double name of nephew and of murderer—(alas, alas, he knew not then, that his nephew was his murderer!)—how would you have wished, as I did, though you had a thousand years of life to come, to have given them all to have lengthened his one hour! But being dead, I fled the sight of what my hands had done; nor could I, to have gained the empire of the world, have violated, by theft, his sacred corpse.

Mill. Whining, preposterous, canting villain! to

murder your uncle, rob him of life, nature's first, last, dear prerogative, after which there's no injury, then fear to take what he no longer wanted, and bring to me your penury and guilt. Do you think I'll hazard my reputation, nay, my life, to entertain you?

Barn. Oh, Millwood!—this from thee;—But I have done. If you hate me; if you wish me dead, then are you happy; for, oh, 'tis sure my grief will quickly end me.

Mill. In his madness he will discover all, and involve me in his ruin. We are on a precipice from whence there's no retreat for both—Then to preserve myself—[*Pauses.*]—There is no other way. —'Tis dreadful, but reflection comes too late when danger's pressing, and there's no room for choice. —It must be done. [*Aside. Rings a Bell.*]

Enter a SERVANT.

Fetch me an officer, and seize this villain. He has confessed himself a murderer. Should I let him escape, I might justly be thought as bad as he.

[*Exit SERVANT.*]

Barn. Oh, Millwood! sure you do not, you cannot mean it. Stop the messenger; upon my knees, I beg you'd call him back. 'Tis fit I die, indeed, but not by you. I will this instant deliver myself into the hands of justice, indeed I will; for death is all I wish. But thy ingratitude so tears my wounded soul, 'tis worse ten thousand times than death with torture.

Mill. Call it what you will; I am willing to live, and live secure, which nothing but your death can warrant.

Barn. If there be a pitch of wickedness that sets the author beyond the reach of vengeance, you must be secure. But what remains for me but a dismal dungeon, hard galling fetters, an awful trial, and an ignominious death, justly to fall unpitied and ab-

horred : After death to be suspended between heaven and earth, a dreadful spectacle, the warning and horror of a gaping crowd ! This I could bear, nay, wish not to avoid, had it but come from any hand but thine.

Enter BLUNT, OFFICER, and ATTENDANTS.

Mill. Heaven defend me ! Conceal a murderer ! Here, sir, take this youth into your custody. I accuse him of murder, and will appear to make good my charge. *[They seize him.]*

Barn. To whom, of what, or how shall I complain ? I'll not accuse her. The hand of Heaven is in it, and this the punishment of lust and parricide.

Be warn'd, ye youths, who see my sad despair :

Avoid lewd women, false as they are fair.

By reason guided, honest joys pursue :

The fair, to honour and to virtue true,

Just to herself, will ne'er be false to you.

By my example, learn to shun my fate :

(How wretched is the man who's wise too late !)

Ere innocence, and fame, and life be lost,

Here purchase wisdom cheaply, at my cost.

[Exeunt BARNWELL, OFFICER, and ATTENDANTS.

Mill. Where's Lucy ? Why is she absent at such a time ?

Blunt. Would I had been so too ! Lucy will soon be here ; and, I hope, to thy confusion, thou devil !

Mill. Insolent !—This to me ?

Blunt. The worst that we know of the devil is, that he first seduces to sin, and then betrays to punishment. *[Exit.]*

Mill. They disapprove of my conduct then—My ruin is resolved.—I see my danger, but scorn both

it and them. I was not born to fall by such weak instruments. [Going.

Enter THOROWGOOD.

Thor. Where is the scandal of her own sex, and curse of ours?

Mill. What means this insolence? Whom do you seek?

Thor. Millwood.

Mill. Well, you have found her then. I am Millwood.

Thor. Then you are the most impious wretch that e'er the sun beheld.

Mill. From your appearance I should have expected wisdom and moderation, but your manners belie your aspect. What is your business here? I know you not.

Thor. Hereafter you may know me better; I am Barnwell's master.

Mill. Then you are master to a villain, which, I think, is not much to your credit.

Thor. Had he been as much above thy arts, as my credit is superior to thy malice, I need not have blushed to own him.

Mill. My arts! I don't understand you, sir; if he has done amiss, what's that to me? Was he my servant, or yours? you should have taught him better.

Thor. Know, sorceress, I'm not ignorant of any of the arts by which you first deceived the unwary youth. I know how, step by step, you've led him on, reluctant and unwilling, from crime to crime, to this last horrid act, which you contrived, and, by your cursed wiles, even forced him to commit.

Mill. Ha! Lucy has got the advantage, and accused me first. Unless I can turn the accusation, and fix it upon her and Blunt, I am lost. [Aside.

Thor. Had I known your cruel design sooner, it

had been prevented. To see you punished, as the law directs, is all that now remains. Poor satisfaction! for he, innocent as he is, compared to you, must suffer too.

Mill. I find, sir, we are both unhappy in our servants. I was surprised at such ill treatment, without cause, from a gentleman of your appearance, and therefore too hastily returned it; for which I ask your pardon. I now perceive you have been so far imposed on, as to think me engaged in a former correspondence with your servant, and some way or other accessory to his undoing.

Thor. I charge you as the cause, the sole cause of all his guilt, and all his suffering, of all he now endures, and must endure, till a violent and shameful death shall put a dreadful period to his life and miseries together.

Mill. 'Tis very strange. But who's secure from scandal and detraction? So far from contributing to his ruin, I never spoke to him till since this fatal accident, which I lament as much as you. 'Tis true, I have a servant, on whose account he hath of late frequented my house. If she has abused my good opinion of her, am I to blame? Has not Barnwell done the same by you?

Thor. I hear you; pray, go on.

Mill. I have been informed he had a violent passion for her, and she for him: but till now I always thought it innocent. I know her poor, and given to expensive pleasures. Now, who can tell but she may have influenced the amorous youth to commit this murder, to supply her extravagancies?—It must be so. I now recollect a thousand circumstances that confirm it. I'll have her, and a man servant, whom I suspect as an accomplice, secured immediately. I hope, sir, you will lay aside your ill-grounded suspicions of me, and join to punish the real contrivers of this bloody deed.

[*Offers to go.*]

Thor. Madam, you pass not this way: I see your design, but shall protect them from your malice.

Mill. I hope you will not use your influence, and the credit of your name, to screen such guilty wretches. Consider, sir, the wickedness of persuading a thoughtless youth to such a crime.

Thor. I do——and of betraying him when it was done.

Mill. That, which you call betraying him, may convince you of my innocence. She, who loves him, though she contrived the murder, would never have delivered him into the hands of justice, as I, struck with horror at his crimes, have done.

Thor. Those, whom subtilely you would accuse, you know are your accusers; and, which proves unanswerably their innocence and your guilt, they accused you before the deed was done, and did all that was in their power to prevent it.

Mill. Sir, you are very hard to be convinced; but I have a proof, which, when produced, will silence all objections. [Exit MILLWOOD.]

Enter LUCY, TRUEMAN, BLUNT, OFFICERS, &c.

Lucy. Gentlemen, pray place yourselves, some on one side of that door, and some on the other; watch her entrance, and act as your prudence shall direct you. This way, [To THOROWGOOD.] and note her behaviour. I have observed her; she's driven to the last extremity, and is forming some desperate resolution. I guess at her design.

Enter MILLWOOD, with a Pistol—TRUEMAN secures her.

True. Here thy power of doing mischief ends; deceitful, cruel, woman!

Mill. Fool, hypocrite, villain, man! thou canst not call me that.

True. To call thee woman, were to wrong thy sex, thou devil !

Mill. That imaginary being is an emblem of thy cursed sex collected. A mirror, wherein each particular man may see his own likeness, and that of all mankind.

Thor. Think not, by aggravating the faults of others, to extenuate thy own, of which the abuse of such uncommon perfections of mind and person, is not the least.

Mill. If such I had, well may I curse your barbarous sex, who robbed me of them ere I knew their worth ; then left me, too late, to count their value by their loss. Another and another spoiler came, and all my gain was poverty and reproach. My soul disdained, and yet disdains, dependence and contempt. Riches, no matter by what means obtained, I saw secured the worst of men from both. I found it therefore necessary to be rich, and to that end I summoned all my arts. You call them wicked, be it so ; they were such as my conversation with your sex had furnished me withal.

Thor. Sure, none but the worst of men conversed with thee.

Mill. Men of all degrees, and all professions, I have known, yet found all were alike wicked to the utmost of their power.—What are your laws, of which you make your boast, but the fool's wisdom, and the coward's valour, the instrument and screen of all your villanies ? By them, you punish in others what you act yourselves, or would have acted, had you been in their circumstances. The judge, who condemns the poor man for being a thief, had been a thief himself had he been poor. Thus you go on, deceiving and being deceived, harassing, plaguing, and destroying one another. But women are your universal prey.

Women, by whom you are, the source of joy,
With cruel arts you labour to destroy;
A thousand ways, our ruin you pursue,
Yet blame in us those arts first taught by you.
Oh, may from hence, each violated maid,
By flattering, faithless, barb'rous, man betray'd,
When robb'd of innocence, and virgin fame,
From your destruction, raise a nobler name,
T'avenge their sex's wrongs, devote their mind,
And future Millwoods, prove to plague mankind.
[*Exeunt.*]

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

A Dungeon.—A Table, and a Lamp.

BARNWELL *reading.*

Enter THOROWGOOD.

Thor. There see the bitter fruits of passion's detested reign, and sensual appetite indulged: severe reflections, penitence, and tears.

Barn. My honoured, injured, master, whose goodness has covered me a thousand times with shame, forgive this last unwilling disrespect. Indeed I saw you not.

Thor. 'Tis well; I hope you are better employed, in viewing of yourself. I sent a reverend divine, to

teach you to improve it, and should be glad to hear of his success.

Barn. The word of truth, which he recommended for my constant companion in this my sad retirement, has at length removed the doubts I laboured under. From thence I've learned the infinite extent of heavenly mercy; that my offences, though great, are not unpardonable; and that 'tis not my interest only, but my duty, to believe, and to rejoice in my hope. So shall Heaven receive the glory, and future penitents the profit of my example.

Thor. Proceed. Celestial truths!

Barn. 'Tis wonderful, that words should charm despair, speak peace and pardon to a murderer's conscience; but truth and mercy flow in every sentence; attended with force and energy divine. How shall I describe my present state of mind? I hope in doubt, and trembling I rejoice; I feel my grief increase, even as my fears give way. Joy and gratitude now supply more tears than the horror and anguish of despair before.

Thor. These are the genuine signs of true repentance; the only preparatory, the certain way to everlasting peace.

Barn. What do I owe for all your generous kindness? But, though I cannot, Heaven can and will reward you.

Thor. To see thee thus, is joy too great for words. Farewell.—Heaven strengthen thee:—Farewell.

Barn. Oh, sir, there's something I would say, if my sad swelling heart would give me leave.

Thor. Give it vent a while, and try.

Barn. I had a friend—'tis true I am unworthy—yet methinks your generous example might persuade— Could not I see him once, before I go from whence there's no return?

Thor. He's coming, and as much thy friend as

ever. This torrent of domestic misery bears too hard upon me. I must retire, to indulge a weakness I find impossible to overcome. [*Aside.*] Much loved—and much lamented youth!—Farewell.—Heaven strengthen thee.—Eternally farewell.

Barn. The best of masters and of men—Farewell! While I live let me not want your prayers.

Thor. Thou shalt not. Thy peace being made with Heaven, death is already vanquished. Bear a little longer the pains that attend this transitory life, and cease from pain for ever. [*Exit THOROWGOOD.*]

Barn. I find a power within, that bears my soul above the fears of death, and, spite of conscious shame and guilt, gives me a taste of pleasure more than mortal.

Enter TRUEMAN.

Trueman!—My friend, whom I so wished to see, yet now he's here, I dare not look upon him.

[*Weeps.*]

True. Oh, Barnwell! Barnwell!

Barn. Mercy! Mercy! gracious Heaven! For death, but not for this, I was prepared.

True. What have I suffered since I saw thee last! What pain has absence given me!—But, oh, to see thee thus!—

Barn. I know it is dreadful! I feel the anguish of thy generous soul—But I was born to murder all who love me! [*Both weep.*]

True. I came not to reproach you; I thought to bring you comfort; but I am deceived, for I have none to give. I came to share thy sorrow, but cannot bear my own. Oh, had you trusted me, when first the fair seducer tempted you, all might have been prevented.

Barn. Alas, thou knowest not what a wretch I've been. Breach of friendship was my first and least offence. So far was I lost to goodness, so devoted

to the author of my ruin, that, had she insisted on my murdering thee,—I think—I should have done it.

True. Pr'ythee, aggravate thy faults no more.

Barn. I think I should ! Thus good and generous as you are, I should have murdered you !

True. We have not yet embraced, and may be interrupted. Come to my arms.

Barn. Are those honest arms and faithful bosom fit to embrace and to support a murderer ? These iron fetters only shall clasp, and flinty pavement bear me ; [*Throwing himself on the Ground.*] even these too good for such a bloody monster.

True. Shall fortune sever those whom friendship joined ? Thy miseries cannot lay thee so low, but love will find thee. Here will we offer to stern calamity ; this place the altar, and ourselves the sacrifice. Our mutual groans shall echo to each other through the dreary vault ; our sighs shall number the moments as they pass, and mingling tears communicate such anguish, as words were never made to express.

Barn. Then be it so. [*Rising.*] Since you propose an intercourse of woe, pour all your griefs into my breast, and in exchange take mine. [*Embracing.*] Where's now the anguish that you promised ? You've taken mine, and make me no return. Sure peace and comfort dwell within these arms, and sorrow can't approach me while I am here.

Enter KEEPER.

Keep. Sir.

True. I come.

[*Exit KEEPER.*

Barn. Must you leave me ? Death would soon have parted us for ever.

True. Oh, my Barnwell ! there's yet another task behind. Again your heart must bleed for others' woes.

Barn. To meet and part with you I thought was all I had to do on earth. What is there more for me to do or suffer ?

True. I dread to tell thee, yet it must be known !
Maria——

Barn. Our master's fair and virtuous daughter?—

True. The same.

Barn. No misfortune, I hope, has reached that maid ! Preserve her, Heaven, from every ill, to show mankind, that goodness is your care !

True. You must remember (for we all observed it) for some time past, a heavy melancholy weighed her down. Disconsolate she seemed, and pined and languished from a cause unknown ; till, hearing of your dreadful fate, the long-stifled flame blazed out ; and in the transport of her grief discovered her own lost state, while she lamented yours.

Barn. Why did you not let me die, and never know it ?

True. It was impossible. She makes no secret of her passion for you ; she is determined to see you ere you die, and waits for me to introduce her.

[*Exit* TRUEMAN.]

Barn. Vain, busy thoughts, be still ! What avails it to think on what I might have been ! I now am——what I've made myself.

Enter TRUEMAN and MARIA.

True. Madam, reluctant I lead you to this dismal scene. This is the seat of misery and guilt. Here awful justice reserves her public victims. This is the entrance to a shameful death.

Mar. To this sad place then, no improper guest, the abandoned lost Maria brings despair, and sees the subject and the cause of all this world of woe. Silent and motionless he stands, as if his soul had quitted her abode, and the lifeless form alone was left behind.

Barn. Just Heaven ! I am your own ; do with me what you please.

Mar. Why are your streaming eyes still fixed below, as though thou'dst give the greedy earth thy sorrows, and rob me of my due ? Were happiness within your power, you should bestow it where you pleased ; but in your misery, I must and will partake.

Barn. Oh, say not so, but fly, abhor, and leave me to my fate ! Consider what you are, how vast your fortune, and how bright your fame. Have pity on your youth, your beauty, and unequalled virtue, for which so many noble peers have sighed in vain. Bless with your charms some honourable lord. Adorn with your beauty, and by your example improve, the English court, that justly claims such merit : so shall I quickly be to you—as though I had never been.

Mar. When I forget you, I must be so indeed. Reason, choice, virtue, all forbid it. Let women, like Millwood, if there are more such women, smile in prosperity, and in adversity forsake. Be it the pride of virtue to repair, or to partake, the ruin such have made.

True. Lovely, ill-fated maid !

Mar. Yes, fruitless is my love, and unavailing all my sighs and tears. Can they save thee from approaching death ?—from such a death ? Oh sorrow insupportable !

Barn. Preserve her, Heaven, and restore her peace, nor let her death be added to my crimes ! [*Bell tolls.*] I am summoned to my fate.

Enter KEEPER.

Keep. Sir, the officers attend you. Millwood is already summoned.

Barn. Tell them, I'm ready. And now, my friend, farewell. [*Embracing.*] Support and comfort, the best you can, this mourning fair.—No more—Forget not to pray for me. [*Turning to MARIA.*] Would you,

bright excellence, permit me the honour of a chaste embrace, the last happiness this world could give were mine. [*She inclines towards him, they embrace.*] Exalted goodness! Oh, turn your eyes from earth and me, to heaven, where virtue, like yours, is ever heard! Pray for the peace of my departing soul. Early my race of wickedness began, and soon I reached the summit. Thus justice, in compassion to mankind, cuts off a wretch like me; by one such example, to secure thousands from future ruin.

If any youth, like you, in future times,
Shall mourn my fate, tho' he abhors my crimes;
Or tender maid, like you, my tale shall hear,
And to my sorrows give a pitying tear:
To each such melting eye, and throbbing heart,
Would gracious Heaven this benefit impart;
Never to know my guilt, nor feel my pain,
Then must you own, you ought not to complain,
Since you nor weep, nor shall I die in vain.

True. In vain,

With bleeding hearts, and weeping eyes, we show,
A humane, gen'rous sense of others' woe;
Unless we mark what drew their ruin on,
And, by avoiding that—prevent our own.

[*Exeunt Omnes.*]

THE END.

FATAL CURIOSITY;

A TRAGEDY,

IN THREE ACTS;

By GEORGE LILLO.

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRES ROYAL,

DRURY LANE AND HAYMARKET.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

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REMARKS.

Preceding a play like this, it would be peculiarly injudicious to say a word which might anticipate that interest and that admiration, which the reader of good taste and strong nerves must feel in the perusal.

Dialogue, character, fable, incident, all combine to render this little three act drama one of the most powerful, at the same time the most instructive, which the stage has to boast—yet, for want of that robust constitution just alluded to, which implies strength of mind as well as body, an audience shrink from beholding it performed; and even certain tremulous readers should be forewarned, not to proceed so far as the catastrophe.

The author of this tragedy was a man of a very singular imagination, for all his plays are of a species almost wholly distinct from those of every other dramatic writer. “George Barnwell,” as well as “Fatal Curiosity,” is a proof of the particularity of Lillo’s muse; and, to be original both in design and execution, is surely one of the highest encomiums, that an artist can deserve.

The affecting tragedy of "George Barnwell" has more admirers than it is the fashion to acknowledge: yet it gives not even an intimation, that the same dramatist could ever arrive to that degree of perfection in his art, as to produce "Fatal Curiosity."

From the first scene of this tragedy to the last, all is interesting, all is natural—occurrences, as in real life, give rise to passions; passion inspires new thoughts, elevates each sentiment, embellishes the language, and renders every page of the production either sweetly pathetic, or horribly sublime.

Yet the highest merit of any, is the moral which the work contains. The unfortunate should read it, and be taught patience—the fortunate, and learn gratitude to Divine Providence.

There is even instruction to be gained by a very inferior event in the play—deception, for whatever innocent purpose used, is shown to be of most fatal tendency.

Though every character partakes of the general interest which the story excites, yet Old Wilmot and his wife are pre-eminent in all they utter, even before they are provoked to act. It may be, their conversation has greater force, and appears to have more of nature, because the dissatisfied and complainer, though seldom made an object of interest by an author, is a being far more familiar to every observer, and by far more pitiable, than the resigned and the patient.

"Fatal Curiosity" was first performed in the year 1736, and received most favourably—it then was with-

drawn from the stage till about the year 1782, when Colman the elder revived it at his theatre during the summer.

Mr. Colman was a warm admirer of Lillo's works, and of this play in particular. He caused it to be rehearsed with infinite care; and, from the reception of the two first acts, and part of the third, he had the hope that it would become extremely popular—but, on the performance of a scene which followed soon after, a certain horror seized the audience, and was manifested by a kind of stifled scream.

After having shuddered at this tragedy, even as a fiction, it is dreadful to be told,—that the most horrid event which here takes place, is merely the representation of a fact which occurred at a village on the western coast of England.

That the direful circumstance thus brought upon the stage might probably occur, is the great hold which it has upon the heart;—had probability been violated, that powerful force would have failed—but Lillo is an author whose characters are such as inhabit the world, and do not reside merely in romances.

Fielding, another copyist of nature, says of the play, in his prologue:—

- “ No fustian hero rages here to-night;
- “ No armies fall, to fix a tyrant's right:
- “ From lower life we draw our scene's distress:—
- “ Let not your equals move your pity less.”

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

	DRURY LANE.	HAYMARKET.
OLD WILMOT	<i>Mr. Kemble.</i>	<i>Mr. Bensley.</i>
YOUNG WILMOT	<i>Mr. Barrymore.</i>	<i>Mr. Palmer.</i>
EUSTACE	<i>Mr. Truman.</i>	<i>Mr. R. Palmer.</i>
RANDAL	<i>Mr. C. Kemble.</i>	<i>Mr. Bannister, jun.</i>
AGNES	<i>Mrs. Siddons.</i>	<i>Miss Sherry.</i>
CHARLOTTE	<i>Mrs. Powell.</i>	<i>Mrs. Bulkeley.</i>
MARIA	<i>Miss Leake.</i>	<i>Miss Hooke.</i>

SCENE—Penryn, in Cornwall.

FATAL CURIOSITY.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

WILMOT'S *House.*

OLD WILMOT *alone.*

O. Wilm. The day is far advanc'd. The cheerful
sun

Pursues with vigour his repeated course:
No labour lessens, nor no time decays
His strength, or splendour: evermore the same,
From age to age his influence sustains
Dependent worlds, bestows both life and motion
On the dull mass, that forms their dusky orbs,
Cheers them with heat, and gilds them with his
brightness.

Yet man, of jarring elements compos'd,
Who posts from change to change, from the first hour
Of his frail being to his dissolution,
Enjoys the sad prerogative above him,
To think, and to be wretched! What is life
To him, that's born to die!——
Or, what the wisdom, whose perfection ends
In knowing, we know nothing?——
Mere contradiction all! A tragic farce,

Tedious, though short, elab'rate without art,
Ridiculously sad——

Enter RANDAL.

Where hast been, Randal?

Rand. Not out of Penryn, sir; but to the strand,
To hear what news from Falmouth, since the storm
Of wind last night.

O. Wilm. It was a dreadful one.

Rand. Some found it so. A noble ship from India
Ent'ring the harbour, run upon a rock,
And there was lost.

O. Wilm. What 'came of those on board her?

Rand. Some few are sav'd, but much the greater
part,

'Tis thought, are perish'd.

O. Wilm. They are past the fear
Of future tempests, or a wreck on shore:
Those, who escap'd, are still expos'd to both.
Where's your mistress?

Rand. I saw her pass the High-street, t'wards the
Minster.

O. Wilm. She's gone to visit Charlotte. She doth
well.

In the soft bosom of that gentle maid,
'There dwells more goodness than the rigid race
Of moral pedants e'er believ'd, or taught.
With what amazing constancy and truth
Doth she sustain the absence of our son,
Whom more than life she loves! How shun for him,
Whom we shall ne'er see more, the rich and great;
Who own her charms, and sigh to make her happy!
Since our misfortunes we have found no friend,
None who regarded our distress, but her;
And she, by what I have observ'd of late,
Is wearied, or exhausted. Curs'd condition
To live a burden to one only friend,
And blast her youth with our contagious woe!

Who, that had reason, soul, or sense, would bear it
A moment longer? Then this honest wretch!—
I must dismiss him—Why should I detain
A grateful, gen'rous youth, to perish with me?
His service may procure him bread elsewhere,
Though I have none to give him.—Pr'ythee, Randal,
How long hast thou been with me?

Rand. Fifteen years.

I was a very child when first ye took me,
To wait upon your son, my dear young master.
I oft have wish'd I'd gone to India with him,
Though you, desponding, give him o'er for lost.
[OLD WILMOT wipes his Eyes.]

I am to blame: this talk revives your sorrow
For his long absence.

O. Wilm. That cannot be reviv'd
Which never died.

Rand. The whole of my intent
Was to confess your bounty, that supplied
The loss of both my parents: I was long
The object of your charitable care.

O. Wilm. No more of that: Thou'st serv'd me
longer since

Without reward; so that account is balanced,
Or, rather, I'm thy debtor. I remember,
When Poverty began to show her face
Within these walls, and all my other servants,
Like pamper'd vermin from a falling house,
Retreated with the plunder they had gain'd,
And left me, too indulgent and remiss
For such ungrateful wretches, to be crush'd
Beneath the ruin they had help'd to make,
That you, more good than wise, refus'd to leave me.

Rand. Nay, I beseech you, sir!—

O. Wilm. With my distress,
In perfect contradiction to the world,
Thy love, respect, and diligence, increas'd.
Now, all the recompence within my power,

Is to discharge thee, Randal, from my hard,
Unprofitable, service.

Rand. Heaven forbid!

Shall I forsake you in your worst necessity?
Believe me, sir, my honest soul abhors
The barb'rous thought!

O. Wilm. What! canst thou feed on air?
I have not left wherewith to purchase food
For one meal more!

Rand. Rather than leave you thus,
I'll beg my bread, and live on others' bounty,
While I serve you.

O. Wilm. Down, down, my swelling heart,
Or burst in silence! 'Tis thy cruel fate
Insults thee by his kindness—He is innocent
Of all the pain it gives thee.—Go thy ways:
I will no more suppress thy youthful hopes
Of rising in the world.

Rand. 'Tis true, I'm young,
And never try'd my fortune, or my genius,
Which may, perhaps, find out some happy means,
As yet unthought of, to supply your wants.

O. Wilm. Thou tortur'st me: I hate all obligations
Which I can ne'er return: And who art thou,
That I should stoop to take them from thy hand?
Care for thyself, but take no thought for me!
I will not want thee—trouble me no more,

Rand. Be not offended, sir, and I will go.
I ne'er repin'd at your commands before;
But Heaven's my witness, I obey you now
With strong reluctance and a heavy heart!
Farewell, my worthy master!

[Going.]

O. Wilm. Farewell!—Stay;
As thou art yet a stranger to the world,
Of which, alas, I've had too much experience!
I should, methinks, before we part, bestow
A little counsel on thee.—Dry thy eyes:
If thou weep'st thus, I shall proceed no farther.
Dost thou aspire to greatness, or to wealth?

Quit books, and the unprofitable search
Of wisdom there, and study humankind :
No science will avail thee without that ;
But that obtain'd, thou need'st not any other.
This will instruct thee to conceal thy views,
And wear the face of probity and honour,
Till thou hast gain'd thy end: which must be ever
Thy own advantage, at that man's expense
Who shall be weak enough to think thee honest.

Rand. You mock me, sure !

O. Wilm. I never was more serious.

Rand. Why should you counsel, what you scorn'd
to practise ?

O. Wilm. Because that foolish scorn has been my
ruin.

I've been an idiot, but would have thee wiser,
And treat mankind, as they would treat thee, Ran-
dal ;

As they deserve, and I've been treated by them :
Thou'st seen by me, and those who now despise me,
How men of fortune fall, and beggars rise ;
Shun my example ; treasure up my precepts ;
The world's before thee—be a knave, and prosper.
What, art thou dumb ? [After a long Pause.]

Rand. Amazement ties my tongue.

Where are your former principles ?

O. Wilm. No matter ;

Suppose I have renounc'd them : I have passions,
And love thee still ; therefore would have thee think,
The world is all a scene of deep deceit,
And he, who deals with mankind on the square,
Is his own bubble, and undoes himself.

Farewell, and mark my counsel, boy. [Exit.]

Rand. Amazement !

Is this the man I thought so wise and just ?
What, teach and counsel me to be a villain !
Sure grief has made him frantic, or some fiend
Assum'd his shape: I shall suspect my senses.
High minded he was ever, and improvident,

But pitiful, and generous, to a fault.
Pleasure he lov'd, but honour was his idol.
O fatal change ! O horrid transformation !
So a majestic temple, sunk to ruin,
Becomes the loathsome shelter and abode
Of lurking serpents, toads, and beasts of prey ;
And scaly dragons hiss, and lions roar,
Where wisdom taught, and music charm'd before.
[Exit.]

SCENE II.

CHARLOTTE'S House.

Enter CHARLOTTE and MARIA.

Char. What terror and amazement must they feel
Who die by shipwreck !

Mar. 'Tis a dreadful thought !

Char. Ay ; is it not, Maria ?—To descend,
Living, and conscious, to the wat'ry tomb !
Alas ! had we no sorrows of our own,
The frequent instances of others' woe,
Must give a gen'rous mind a world of pain.
But you forget you promis'd me to sing.
Though cheerfulness and I have long been strangers,
Harmonious sounds are still delightful to me.
There's sure no passion in the human soul,
But finds its food in music. I would hear
The song, compos'd by that unhappy maid,
Whose faithful lover 'scap'd a thousand perils
From rocks and sands, and the devouring deep ;
And after all, being arriv'd at home,
Passing a narrow brook, was drowned there,
And perish'd in her sight.

SONG—MARIA.

Cease, cease, heart-easing tears !

Adieu, you flatt'ring fears,

Which seven long tedious years

Taught me to bear.

Tears are for lighter woes ;

Fear no such danger knows,

As fate remorseless shows,

Endless despair !

Dear cause of all my pain,

On the wide stormy main,

Thou wast preserv'd in vain,

Though still ador'd.

Hadst thou dy'd there unseen,

My wounded eyes had been

Sav'd from the direst scene

Maid e'er deplor'd.

[CHARLOTTE finds a Letter.

Char. What's this?—A letter superscrib'd to me!

None could convey it here, but you, Maria.

Ungen'rous, cruel maid ! to use me thus !

To join with flatt'ring men, to break my peace,

And persecute me to the last retreat!

Mar. Why should it break your peace, to hear the
sighs

Of honourable love? This letter is——

Char. No matter whence: return it back unopen'd:

I have no love no charms, but for my Wilmot,

Nor would have any.

Mar. Alas ! Wilmot's dead;

Or, living, dead to you.

Char. I'll not despair: Patience shall cherish
hope;

Nor wrong his honour by unjust suspicion.

I know his truth, and will preserve my own.

But, to prevent all future importunity,
Know, thou incessant foe to my repose,
Whether he sleeps secure from mortal cares,
In the deep bosom of the boist'rous main,
Or, toss'd with tempest, still endures its rage;
No second choice shall violate my vows.
High Heaven, which heard them, and abhors the per-
jur'd,

Can witness, they were made without reserve :
Never to be retracted, ne'er dissolv'd
By accident or absence, time or death.

Mar. And did your vows oblige you to support
His haughty parents, to your utter ruin?—
Well may you weep, to think on what you've done.

Char. I weep to think that I can do no more
For their support. What will become of them?—
The hoary, helpless, miserable pair !

Mar. What I can't praise, you force me to admire,
And mourn for you, as you lament for them.
Your patience, constancy, and resignation,
Merit a better fate.

Char. So pride would tell me,
And vain self-love, but I believe them not :
And if by wanting pleasure, I have gain'd
Humility, I'm richer for my loss.

Mar. You have the heavenly art still to improve
Your mind by all events—But here comes one,
Whose pride seems to increase with her misfortunes.
Her faded dress, unfashionably fine,
As ill conceals her poverty, as that
Strain'd complaisance, her haughty, swelling, heart.
Though perishing with want, so far from asking,
She ne'er receives a favour uncompell'd,
And, while she ruins, scorns to be oblig'd :
Let me depart, I know she loves me not.

[Exit MARIA.]

Enter AGNES.

Char. This visit's kind.

Agnes. Few else would think it so :

Those, who would once have thought themselves much
honour'd

By the least favour, though 'twere but a look,
I could have shown them, now refuse to see me.

'Tis misery enough to be reduc'd

To the low level of the common herd,

Who, born to beggary, envy all above them :

But 'tis the curse of curses, to endure

The insolent contempt of those we scorn.

Char. By scorning, we provoke them to contempt,
And thus offend, and suffer in our turns :

We must have patience.

Agnes. No, I scorn them yet;

But there's no end of suff'ring : Who can say

Their sorrows are complete ? My wretched husband,

Tir'd with our woes, and hopeless of relief,

Grows sick of life.

And, urg'd by indignation and despair,

Would plunge into eternity at once,

By foul self murder.

Char. Gracious Heaven support him !

Agnes. His fixed love for me,

Whom he would fain persuade to share his fate,

And take the same uncertain, dreadful, course,

Alone withholds his hand.

Char. And may it ever !

Agnes. I've known with him, the two extremes of
life,

The highest happiness, and deepest woe,

With all the sharp and bitter aggravations

Of such a vast transition—Such a fall

In the decline of life !—I have as quick,

As exquisite a sense of pain, as he,
And would do any thing, but die, to end it;
But there my courage fails. Death is the worst
That fate can bring, and cuts off ev'ry hope.

Char. We must not chuse, but strive to bear our
lot

Without reproach, or guilt. By one rash act
Of desperation, we may overthrow
The merit we've been raising all our days,
And lose our whole reward. And now, methinks,
Now, more than ever, we have cause to fear,
And be upon our guard. The hand of Heaven
Spreads clouds on clouds o'er our benighted heads,
And, wrapp'd in darkness, doubles our distress.
I had, the night last past, repeated twice,
A strange and awful dream: I would not yield
To fearful superstition, nor despise
The admonition of a friendly power,
That wish'd my good.

Agnes. I have certain plagues enough,
Without the help of dreams, to make me wretched.

Char. I would not stake my happiness or duty,
On their uncertain credit, nor on aught
But reason, and the known decrees of Heaven.
Yet dreams have sometimes shown events to come,
And may excite to vigilance and care.
My vision may be such, and sent to warn us,
(Now we are tried by multiply'd afflictions)
To mark each motion of our swelling hearts,
Lest we attempt to extricate ourselves,
And seek deliv'rance by forbidden ways—
To keep our hopes and innocence entire,
Till we're dismiss'd to join the happy dead,
Or Heaven relieves us here.

Agnes. Well, to your dream.

Char. Methought, I sat, in a dark winter's night,
On the wide summit of a barren mountain;

The sharp, bleak winds, pierc'd through my shiv'ring
frame,

And storms of hail, and sleet, and driving rains,
Beat with impetuous fury on my head,
Drench'd my chill'd limbs, and pour'd a deluge
round me.

On one hand, ever-gentle Patience sat,
On whose calm bosom I reclin'd my head ;
And on the other, silent Contemplation.
At length, to my unclos'd, and watchful eyes,
That long had roll'd in darkness, dawn appear'd ;
And I beheld a man, an utter stranger,
But of graceful and exalted mien,
Who press'd with eager transport to embrace me.
I shunn'd his arms : But at some words he spoke,
Which I have now forgot, I turn'd again ;
But he was gone—And oh, transporting sight !
Your son, my dearest Wilmot, fill'd his place !

Agnes. If I regarded dreams, I should expect
Some fair event from yours.

Char. But what's to come,
Though more obscure, is terrible indeed.
Methought we parted soon, and when I sought him,
You and his father—(Yes, you both were there)
Strove to conceal him from me. I pursu'd you
Both with my cries, and call'd on Heaven and earth
To judge my wrongs, and force you to reveal
Where you had hid my love, my life, my Wilmot !

Agnes. Unless you mean t'offend me, spare the
rest.

'Tis just as likely Wilmot should return,
As we become your foes.

Char. Far be such thought
From Charlotte's breast : But when I heard you name
Self murder, it reviv'd the frightful image
Of such a dreadful scene !

Agnes. You will persist!—

Char. Excuse me : I have done. Being a dream, I thought, at least, it could not give offence.

Agnes. You could not think so, had you thought at all.

But I take nothing ill from thee.—Adieu !
I've tarried longer than I first intended,
And my poor husband mourns the while, alone.

[*Exit AGNES.*]

Char. She's gone abruptly, and, I fear, displeas'd.
The least appearance of advice or caution,
Sets her impatient temper in a flame.
When grief, that well might humble, swells our pride,
And pride, increasing, aggravates our grief,
The tempest must prevail till we are lost.
Heaven grant a fairer issue to her sorrows ! [Exit.]

SCENE III.

The Town and Port of Penryn.

Enter YOUNG WILMOT and EUSTACE, in Indian Habits.

Y. Wilm. Welcome, my friend, to Penryn ! Here we're safe.

Eust. Then we're deliver'd twice: first from the sea,

And then from men, who, more remorseless, prey
On shipwreck'd wretches, and who spoil, and murder

Those, whom fell tempests, and devouring waves,
In all their fury, spar'd.

Y. Wilm. It is a scandal,
(Though malice must acquit the better sort),
The rude, unpolish'd people here, in Cornwall,
Have long lain under, and with too much justice :
For 'tis an evil, grown almost invet'rate,
And asks a bold and skilful hand to cure.

Eust. Your treasure's safe, I hope.

Y. Wilm. 'Tis here, thank Heaven!
Being in jewels, when I saw our danger,
I hid it in my bosom.

Eust. I observed you,
And wonder how you could command your thoughts,
In such a time of terror and confusion.

Y. Wilm. My thoughts were then at home. O
England! England!

Thou seat of plenty, liberty, and health,
With transport I behold thy verdant fields,
Thy lofty mountains rich with useful ore,
Thy num'rous herds, thy flocks, and winding streams.
After a long and tedious absence, Eustace,
With what delight we breathe our native air,
And tread the genial soil that bore us first !
'Tis said, the world is ev'ry wise man's country ;
Yet, after having view'd its various nations,
I'm weak enough, still to prefer my own,
To all I've seen beside—You smile, my friend !
And think, perhaps, 'tis instinct, more than reason.
Why, be it so : Instinct preceded reason
Ev'n in the wisest men, and may sometimes
Be much the better guide. But, be it either,
I must confess, that even death itself
Appear'd to me with twice its native horrors,
When apprehended in a foreign land.
Death is, no doubt, in ev'ry place the same ;
Yet nature casts a look towards home, and most
Who have it in their power, chuse to expire
Where they first drew their breath.

Eust. Believe me, Wilmot,
Your grave reflections were not what I smil'd at;
I own the truth. That we're return'd to England,
Affords me all the pleasure you can feel.
Yet I must think a warmer passion moves you;
'Thinking of that, I smil'd.

Y. Wilm. O Eustace! Eustace!
Thou know'st, for I've confess'd to thee, I love;
But having never seen the charming maid,
Thou canst not know the fierceness of my flame.
My hopes and fears, like the tempestuous seas
That we have pass'd, now mount me to the skies,
Now hurl me down from that stupendous height.
And drive me to the centre. Did you know
How much depends on this important hour,
You would not be surpris'd to see me thus.
The sinking fortune of our ancient house,
Compell'd me, young, to leave my native country,
My weeping parents, and my lovely Charlotte,
Who rul'd, and must for ever rule, my fate.
O, should my Charlotte, doubtful of my truth,
Or in despair ever to see me more,
Have given herself to some more happy lover!—
Distraction's in the thought!—Or, should my pa-
rents,
Griev'd for my absence, and oppress'd with want,
Have sunk beneath their burden, and expir'd,
While I, too late, was flying to relieve them;
The end of all my long and weary travels,
The hope that made success itself a blessing,
Being defeated, and for ever lost;
What were the riches of the world to me?

Eust. The wretch, who fears all that is possible,
Must suffer more than he, who feels the worst
A man can feel, yet lives exempt from fear.
A woman may be false, and friends are mortal;
And yet your aged parents may be living,
And your fair mistress constant.

Y. Wilm. True, they may;
I doubt, but I despair not. No, my friend!
My hopes are strong, and lively as my fears;
They tell me, Charlotte is as true as fair;
That we shall meet, never to part again;
That I shall see my parents, kiss the tears
From their pale hollow cheeks, cheer their sad
 hearts,
And drive that gaping phantom, meagre want,
For ever from their board; their days to come
Crown all with peace, with pleasure, and abundance;

Receive their fond embraces and their blessings,
And be a blessing to them.

Eust. 'Tis our weakness:
Blind to events, we reason in the dark,
And fondly apprehend, what none e'er found
Or ever shall, pleasure and pain unmix'd;
And flatter, and torment ourselves by turns,
With what shall never be.

Y. Wilm. I'll go this instant
To seek my Charlotte, and explore my fate.

Eust. What, in that foreign habit?

Y. Wilm. That's a trifle,
Not worth my thoughts.

Eust. The hardships you've endur'd,
And your long stay beneath the burning zone,
Where one eternal sultry summer reigns,
Have marr'd the native hue of your complexion:
Methinks you look more like a sun-burnt Indian,
Than a Briton.

Y. Wilm. Well; 'tis no matter, Eustace!
I hope my mind's not alter'd for the worse,
And for my outside—But inform me, friend,
When I may hope to see you.

Eust. When you please:
You'll find me at the inn.

Y. Wilm. When I have learn'd my doom, expect me there.

Till then, farewell!

Eust. Farewell! Success attend you!

[*Exeunt severally.*]

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

CHARLOTTE'S House.

Enter CHARLOTTE, thoughtful ; and soon after, a SERVANT, from the other Side.

Serv. Madam, a stranger, in a foreign habit, desires to see you.

Char. In a foreign habit! —

'Tis strange, and unexpected. But admit him.

[*Exit SERVANT.*]

Who can this stranger be? I know no foreigner—

Enter YOUNG WILMOT.

Nor any man like this.

Y. Wilm. Ten thousand joys!

[*Going to embrace her.*]

Char. Sir, you are too bold—Forbear, and let me know

What business brought you here, or leave the place.

Y. Wilm. Perfidious maid!—Am I forgot, or scorn'd?

Char. Can I forget a man I never knew?

Y. Wilm. My fears are true; some other has her heart:

She's lost: My fatal absence has undone me! [*Aside.*
O! could thy Wilmot have forgot thee, Charlotte!

Char. Ha! Wilmot! say, what do your words import?

O, gentle stranger, ease my swelling heart!
What dost thou know of Wilmot?

Y. Wilm. This I know:—

When all the winds of Heaven seem'd to conspire
Against the stormy main, and dreadful peals
Of rattling thunder deafen'd ev'ry ear,
And drown'd th' affrighten'd mariners' loud cries;
When livid lightning spread its sulphurous flames
Through all the dark horizon, and disclos'd
The raging seas incens'd to his destruction;
When the good ship, in which he was embark'd,
Broke, and o'erwhelm'd by the impetuous surge,
Sunk to the oozy bottom of the deep,
And left him struggling with the warring waves:
In that dread moment, in the jaws of death,
When his strength fail'd, and ev'ry hope forsook him,
And his last breath press'd towards his trembling lips,
The neighbouring rocks, that echo'd to his moan,
Return'd no sound articulate but—Charlotte.

Char. The fatal tempest, whose description strikes
The hearer with astonishment, is ceas'd;
And Wilmot is at rest. The fiercer storm
Of swelling passions, that o'erwhelms the soul,
And rages worse than the mad foaming seas,
In which he perish'd, ne'er shall vex him more.

Y. Wilm. Thou seem'st to think he's dead; enjoy
that thought;
Persuade yourself, that what you wish is true,
And triumph in your falsehood. Yes, he's dead,

You were his fate. The cruel winds and waves,
That cast him pale and breathless on the shore,
Spar'd him for greater woes—to know his Charlotte,
Forgetting all her vows to him and Heaven,
Had cast him from her thoughts.—Then, then he
died;

But never can have rest. Ev'n now he wanders,
A sad, repining, discontented ghost—
The unsubstantial shadow of himself;
And pours his plaintive groans in thy deaf ears,
And stalks, unseen, before thee.

Char. 'Tis enough:

Detested falsehood now has done its worst.
And art thou dead? And wou'dst thou die, my Wil-
mot!

For one thou thought'st unjust? Thou soul of truth!
What must be done? Which way shall I express
Unutterable woe? Or how convince
Thy dear departed spirit, of the love,
Th' eternal love, and never-failing faith
Of thy much injur'd, lost, despairing Charlotte?

Y. Wilm. Be still, my flutt'ring heart; hope not too
soon!

Perhaps I dream, and this is all illusion. [*Aside.*

Char. If, as some teach, the spirit after death,
Free from the bounds and ties of sordid earth,
Can trace us to our most conceal'd retreat,
See all we act, and read our very thoughts;
To thee, O Wilmot! kneeling, I appeal.—
If e'er I swerv'd in action, word, or thought,
Or ever wish'd to taste a joy on earth
That center'd not in thee, since last we parted—
May we ne'er meet again; but thy loud wrongs
So close the ear of mercy to my cries,
That I may never see those bright abodes
Where truth and virtue only have admission,
And thou inhabit'st now!

Y. Wilm. Assist me, Heaven!

Preserve my reason, memory, and sense!
O moderate my fierce tumultuous joys,
Or their excess will drive me to distraction.
O, Charlotte! Charlotte! lovely, virtuous maid!
Can thy firm mind, in spite of time and absence,
Remain unshaken, and support its truth;
And yet thy frailer memory retain
No image, no idea of thy lover?
Why dost thou gaze so wildly? Look on me;
Turn thy dear eyes this way; observe me well.
Have scorching climates, time, and this strange habit,
So chang'd and so disguis'd thy faithful Wilmot,
That nothing in my voice, my face, or mien,
Remains to tell my Charlotte I am he?

[After viewing him some Time, she approaches weeping, and gives him her Hand; and then, turning towards him, sinks upon his Bosom.]

Why dost thou weep? Why dost thou tremble thus?
Why doth thy panting heart, and cautious touch,
Speak thee but half convinc'd? Whence are thy fears?
Why art thou silent? Canst thou doubt me still?

Char. No, Wilmot! no; I'm blind with too much light:

O'ercome with wonder, and oppress'd with joy.
This vast profusion of extreme delight,
Rising at once, and bursting from despair,
Defies the aid of words, and mocks description.
But, for one sorrow, one sad scene of anguish,
That checks the swelling torrent of my joys,
I could not bear the transport.

Y. Wilm. Let me know it:

Give me my portion of thy sorrow, Charlotte!
Let me partake thy grief, or bear it for thee.

Char. Alas, my Wilmot! these sad tears are thine;
They flow for thy misfortunes. I am pierc'd
With all the agonies of strong compassion,
With all the bitter anguish you must feel,
When you shall hear your parents——

Y. Wilm. Are no more !

Char. You apprehend me wrong.

Y. Wilm. Perhaps I do,

Perhaps you mean to say, the greedy grave

Was satisfy'd with one, and one is left

To bless my longing eyes. But which, my Charlotte?

Char. Afflict yourself no more with groundless fears :

Your parents both are living. Their distress—

The poverty to which they are reduc'd,

In spite of my weak aid, was what I mourn'd :

That poverty, in age, to them whose youth

Was crown'd with full prosperity, I fear,

Is worse, much worse, than death.

Y. Wilm. My joy's complete !

My parents living, and possess'd of thee!—

From this blest hour, the happiest of my life,

I'll date my rest. My anxious hopes and fears,

My weary travels, and my dangers past,

Are now rewarded all: Now I rejoice

In my success, and count my riches gain.

For know, my soul's best treasure ! I have wealth

Enough to glut e'en avarice itself :

No more shall cruel want, or proud contempt,

Oppress the sinking spirits, or insult

The hoary heads of those who gave me being.

Char. 'Tis now, O riches, I conceive your worth :

You are not base, nor can you be superfluous,

But when misplac'd in base and sordid hands.

Fly, fly, my Wilmot ! leave thy happy Charlotte !

Thy filial piety, the sighs and tears

Of thy lamenting parents, call thee hence.

Y. Wilm. I have a friend, the partner of my voyage,
Who, in the storm last night, was shipwreck'd with
me.

Char. Shipwreck'd last night !—O, you immortal
powers !

What have you suffered ! How were you preserv'd ?

Y. Wilm. Let that, and all my other strange escapes,
And perilous adventures, be the theme
Of many a happy winter night to come.
My present purpose was t'intreat my angel,
To know this friend, this other better Wilmot,
And come with him this evening to my father's:
I'll send him to thee.

Char. I consent with pleasure.

Y. Wilm. Heavens! what a night! How shall I
bear my joy!

My parents, yours, my friends, all will be mine.
If such the early hopes, the vernal bloom,
The distant prospect of my future bliss,
Then what the ruddy autumn? What the fruit,
The full possession of thy heavenly charms!
[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II.

A Street in Penryn.

Enter RANDAL.

Rand. Poor! poor! and friendless! whither shall
I wander?
And to what point direct my views and hopes?
A menial servant!—No—What, shall I live
Here in this land of freedom, live distinguish'd,
And mark'd the willing slave of some proud subject!
To swell his useless train for broken fragments,
The cold remains of his superfluous board?—
I would aspire to something more and better.

Turn thy eyes then to the prolific ocean,
Whose spacious bosom opens to thy view :
There deathless honour, and unenvy'd wealth,
Have often crown'd the brave adventurer's toils.
This is the native uncontested right,
The fair inheritance of ev'ry Briton,
That dares put in his claim.—My choice is made :
A long farewell to Cornwall, and to England !
If I return—But stay, what stranger's this,
Who, as he views me, seems to mend his pace ?

Enter YOUNG WILMOT.

Y. Wilm. Randal ! the dear companion of my youth !—

Sure, lavish fortune means to give me all
I could desire, or ask, for this blest day,
And leave me nothing to expect hereafter !

Rand. Your pardon, sir ! I know but one on earth
Could properly salute me by the title
You're pleas'd to give me ; and I would not think
That you are he—that you are Wilmot !

Y. Wilm. Why ?

Rand. Because I could not bear the disappointment,
If I should be deceiv'd.

Y. Wilm. I am pleas'd to hear it :
Thy friendly fears better express thy thoughts
Than words could do.

Rand. O, Wilmot !—O, my master !
Are you return'd ?

Y. Wilm. I have not yet embrac'd
My parents—I shall see you at my father's.

Rand. No, I am discharg'd from thence—O, sir,
such ruin——

Y. Wilm. I've heard it all, and hasten to relieve
them :

Sure, Heaven hath bless'd me to that very end :
I've wealth enough—nor shalt thou want a part.

Rand. I have a part already—I am blest
In your success, and share in all your joys.

Y. Wilm. I doubt it not.—But tell me, dost thou
think,

My parents not suspecting my return,
That I may visit them, and not be known?

Rand. 'Tis hard for me to judge.—You are, al-
ready,

Grown so familiar to me, that I wonder
I knew you not at first: yet it may be;
For you're much alter'd, and they think you dead.

Y. Wilm. This is certain; Charlotte beheld me
long,

And heard my loud reproaches, and complaints,
Without rememb'ring she had ever seen me.

My mind, at ease, grows wanton: I would fain
Refine on happiness. Why may I not

Indulge my curiosity, and try
If it be possible, by seeing first

My parents as a stranger, to improve
Their pleasure by surprise?

Rand. It may, indeed,

Enhance your own, to see from what despair
Your timely coming, and unhop'd success,
Have given you power to raise them.

Y. Wilm. I remember,

E'er since we learn'd together, you excell'd
In writing fairly, and could imitate

Whatever hand you saw, with great exactness.

I therefore beg you'll write, in Charlotte's name

And character, a letter to my father;

And recommend me, as a friend of her's,

To his acquaintance.

Rand. Sir, if you desire it—

And yet——

Y. Wilm. Nay, no objections! 'Twill save time,
Most precious with me now. For the deception,
If doing what my Charlotte will approve,

'Cause done for me, and with a good intent,
Deserves the name, I'll answer it myself.
If this succeeds, I purpose to defer
Discov'ring who I am till Charlotte comes,
And thou, and all who love me. Ev'ry friend
Who witnesses my happiness to night,
Will, by partaking, multiply my joys.

Rand. You grow luxurious in imagination.
Could I deny you aught, I would not write
This letter. To say true, I ever thought
Your boundless curiosity a weakness.

Y. Wilm. What canst thou blame in this?

Rand. Your pardon, sir!
Perhaps I spoke too freely;
I'm ready t' obey your orders.

Y. Wilm. I am much thy debtor,
But I shall find a time to quit thy kindness.
O, Randal! but imagine to thyself
The floods of transport, the sincere delight,
That all my friends will feel, when I disclose
To my astonish'd parents my return,
And then confess, that I have well contriv'd,
By giving others joy t'exalt my own. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

OLD WILMOT'S *House.*

OLD WILMOT and AGNES *discovered.*

O. Wilm. Here, take this Seneca; this haughty
pedant,
Who, governing the master of mankind,

And awing power imperial, prates of patience ;
And praises poverty—possess'd of millions :
Sell him, and buy us bread. The scantiest meal
The vilest copy of his book e'er purchas'd,
Will give us more relief in this distress,
Than all his boasted precepts.—Nay, no tears ;
Keep them to move compassion when you beg.

Agnes. My heart may break, but never stoop to that.

O. Wilm. Nor would I live to see it.—But despatch. [Exit AGNES.

Where must I charge this length of misery,
That gathers force each moment as it rolls,
And must at last o'erwhelm me, but on hope :
Vain, flattering, delusive, groundless hope,
That has for years deceiv'd me ?—Had I thought
As I do now,—as wise men ever think,
When first this hell of poverty o'ertook me,
That power to die implies a right to do it,
And should be us'd when life becomes a pain,
What plagues had I prevented !—True, my wife
Is still a slave to prejudice and fear——
I would not leave my better part, the dear [Weeps.
Faithful companion of my happier days,
To bear the weight of age and want alone.—
I'll try once more.—

Enter AGNES, and after her YOUNG WILMOT.

Return'd, my life, so soon !—

Agnes. The unexpected coming of this stranger,
Prevents my going yet.

Y. Wilm. You're, I presume,
The gentleman to whom this is directed.

[Gives a Letter.

What wild neglect, the token of despair,
What indigence, what misery appears
In this once happy house ! What discontent,

What anguish and confusion, fill the faces
Of its dejected owners !

O. Wilm. [*Having read the Letter.*] Sir, such welcome

As this poor house affords, you may command.

Our ever friendly neighbour—once we hop'd

T' have call'd fair Charlotte by a dearer name—

But we have done with hope—I pray excuse

This incoherence.—We had once a son. [*Weeps.*]

Agnes. That you are come from that dear virtuous
maid,

Revives in us the mem'ry of a loss,

Which, though long since, we have not learn'd to
bear.

Y. Wilm. The joy to see them, and the bitter pain

It is to see them thus, touches my soul

With tenderness and grief, that will o'erflow.—

They know me not—and yet I shall, I fear,

Defeat my purpose, and betray myself. [*Aside.*]

O. Wilm. The lady calls you, here, her valu'd
friend ;

Enough, though nothing more should be imply'd,

To recommend you to our best esteem,—

A worthless acquisition ! May she find

Some means that better may express her kindness !

But she, perhaps, has purpos'd to enrich

You with herself, and end her fruitless sorrow

For one, whom death alone can justify

For leaving her so long. If it be so,

May you repair his loss, and be to Charlotte

A second, happier Wilmot ! Partial nature,

Who only favours youth ; as feeble age

Were not her offspring, or below her care,

Has seal'd our doom : No second hope shall spring

To dry our tears, and dissipate despair.

Agnes. The last, and most abandon'd of our kind !
By Heaven and earth neglected or despis'd !

The loathsome grave, that robb'd us of our son,
And all our joys in him, must be our refuge.

Y. Wilm. Let ghosts unpardon'd, or devoted fiends,
Fear without hope, and wail in such sad strains;
But grace defend the living from despair!
The darkest hours precede the rising sun,
And mercy may appear when least expected.

O. Wilm. This I have heard a thousand times repeated,
And have, believing, been as oft deceiv'd.

Y. Wilm. Behold in me an instance of its truth.
At sea twice shipwreck'd, and as oft the prey
Of lawless pirates; by the Arabs thrice
Surpris'd, and robb'd on shore; and once reduc'd
To worse than these, the sum of all distress
That the most wretched feel on this side hell;
Even slavery itself: Yet here I stand,
Except one trouble that will quickly end,
The happiest of mankind.

O. Wilm. A rare example
Of fortune's changes; apter to surprise
Or entertain, than comfort or instruct.
If you would reason from events, be just,
And count, when you escap'd, how many perish'd;
And draw your inference thence.

Agnes. Alas! who knows,
But we were render'd childless by some storm,
In which you, though preserv'd, might bear a part?

Y. Wilm. How has my curiosity betray'd me
Into superfluous pain! I faint with fondness;
And shall, if I stay longer, rush upon them;
Proclaim myself their son; kiss, and embrace them;
Till, with the excess of pleasure and surprise,
Their souls transported, their frail mansions quit,
And leave them breathless in my longing arms.
By circumstances then, and slow degrees,
They must be let into a happiness
Too great for them to bear at once, and live;

That Charlotte will perform. I need not feign
To ask an hour for rest. [*Aside.*] Sir, I entreat
The favour to retire; where, for a while,
I may repose myself. You will excuse
This freedom, and the trouble that I give you:
'Tis long since I have slept, and nature calls.

O. Wilm. I pray, no more: Believe we're only
troubled,
That you should think any excuse were needful.

Y. Wilm. The weight of this to me is some incum-
brance.

[*Takes a Casket out of his Bosom, and gives it
to his Mother.*

And its contents of value: If you please
To take the charge of it till I awake,
I shall not rest the worse. If I should sleep
Till I am ask'd for, as perhaps I may,
I beg that you would wake me.

Agnes. Doubt it not!

Distracted as I am with various woes,
I shall remember that. [*Exit, with OLD WILMOT.*

Y. Wilm. Merciless grief!
What ravage has it made! how has it chang'd
Her lovely form and mind! I feel her anguish,
And dread, I know not what, from her despair.
My father too——O, grant them patience, Heaven!
A little longer, a few short hours more,
And all their cares, and mine, shall end for ever.

[*Exit.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

A Room in OLD WILMOT'S House.

Enter AGNES alone, with the Casket in her Hand.

Agnes. Who should this stranger be?—And then
this casket—

He says it is of value, and yet trusts it,

As if a trifle, to a stranger's hand.

His confidence amazes me—Perhaps

It is not what he says—I'm strongly tempted

To open it, and see.—No, let it rest!

Why should I pry into the cares of others,

Who have so many sorrows of my own?

With how much ease the spring gives way!—Sur-
prising!

My eyes are dazzl'd, and my ravish'd heart

Leaps at the glorious sight. How bright's the lustre,

And how immense the worth of these fair jewels!—

Ay, such a treasure would expel for ever

Base poverty, and all its abject train;

Famine; the cold neglect of friends; the scorn,

Or more provoking pity of the world.

Plenty, content, and power, might take their turn,

And lofty pride bare its aspiring head

At our approach, and once more bend before us.

A pleasing dream?—'Tis past; and now I wake:

For sure it was a happiness to think,

Though, but a moment, such a treasure mine.

Nay, it was more than thought—I saw, and touch'd
 The bright temptation ; and I see it yet—
 'Tis here—'tis mine—I have it in possession—
 Must I resign it ? Must I give it back ?
 Am I in love with misery and want ?—
 To rob myself, and court so vast a loss ?
 Retain it then—But how ?—There is a way—
 Why sinks my heart ? Why does my blood run cold ?
 Why am I thrill'd with horror ?—'Tis not choice,
 But dire necessity suggests the thought.

Enter OLD WILMOT.

O. Wilm. The mind contented, with how little
 pains
 The wand'ring senses yield to soft repose !
 He's fallen asleep already—Happy man !
 What dost thou think, my Agnes, of our guest ?
 He seems to me a youth of great humanity :
 Just ere he clos'd his eyes, that swam in tears,
 He wrung my hand, and press'd it to his lips ;
 And with a look, that pierc'd me to the soul,
 Begg'd me to comfort thee : And—dost thou hear
 me ?—
 What art thou gazing on ?—Fie, 'tis not well.—
 This casket was deliver'd to you clos'd :
 Why have you open'd it ? Should this be known,
 How mean must we appear !

Agnes. And who shall know it ?

O. Wilm. There is a kind of pride, a decent dig-
 nity,
 Due to ourselves ; which, spite of our misfortunes,
 May be maintain'd, and cherish'd to the last.
 To live without reproach, and without leave
 To quit the world, shows sovereign contempt,
 And noble scorn of its relentless malice.

Agnes. Shows sovereign madness, and a scorn of
 sense.

Pursue no farther this detested theme :

I will not die; I will not leave the world,
For all that you can urge, until compell'd.

O. Wilm. To chase a shadow, when the setting
sun

Is darting his last rays, were just as wise
As your anxiety for fleeting life,
Now the last means for its support are failing:
Were famine not as mortal as the sword,
Your warmth might be excus'd—But take thy
choice:

Die how you will, you shall not die alone.

Agnes. Nor live, I hope.

O. Wilm. There is no fear of that.

Agnes. Then, we'll live both.

O. Wilm. Strange folly! where the means?

Agnes. There—those jewels!

O. Wilm. Ha!—Take heed!

Perhaps thou dost but try me—yet take heed!
There's naught so monstrous but the mind of man,
In some conditions, may be brought t'approve:
Theft, sacrilege, treason, and parricide,
When flatt'ring opportunity entic'd,
And desperation drove, have been committed
By those who once would start to hear them nam'd.

Agnes. And add to these detested suicide,
Which, by a crime much less, we may avoid.

O. Wilm. How couldst thou form a thought so
very damning?

So advantageous, so secure, and easy;
And yet so cruel, and so full of horror!

Agnes. 'Tis less impiety, less against nature,
To take another's life, than end our own.

O. Wilm. No matter which, the less or greater
crime:

Howe'er we may deceive ourselves or others,
We act from inclination, not by rule,
Or none could act amiss: and that all err,
None but the conscious hypocrite denies.

—Oh! what is man, his excellence and strength,
When, in an hour of trial and desertion,
Reason, his noblest power, may be suborn'd
To plead the cause of vile assassination!

Agnes. You're too severe: Reason may justly
plead

For our own preservation.

O. Wilm. Rest contented:

Whate'er resistance I may seem to make,
I am betray'd within: My will's seduc'd,
And my whole soul's infected. The desire
Of life returns, and brings with it a train
Of appetites, that rage to be supply'd,
Whoever stands to parley with temptation,
Parleys to be o'ercome.

Agnes. Then naught remains,
But the swift execution of a deed
That is not to be thought on, or delay'd—

O. Wilm. Gen'rous, unhappy man! Oh! what
could move thee

To put thy life and fortune in the hands
Of wretches mad with anguish!

Agnes. By what means
Shall we effect his death?

O. Wilm. Why, what a fiend!——

How cruel, how remorseless and impatient
Have pride and poverty made thee!

Agnes. Barbarous man!

Whose wasteful riots ruin'd our estate,
And drove our son, ere the first down had spread
His rosy cheeks, spite of my sad presages,
Earnest entreaties, agonies, and tears,
To seek his bread 'mongst strangers, and to perish
In some remote, inhospitable land—
The loveliest youth, in person and in mind,
That ever crown'd a groaning mother's pains!
Where was thy pity, where thy patience then?
Thou cruel husband! thou unnat'ral father!

Thou most remorseless, most ungrateful man!
To waste my fortune, rob me of my son,
To drive me to despair, and then reproach me
For being what thou'st made me!

O. Wilm. Dry thy tears.

I ought not to reproach thee. I confess
That thou hast suffer'd much: so have we both.
But chide no more; I'm wrought up to thy purpose.

The poor, ill-fated, unsuspecting victim,
Ere he reclin'd him on the fatal couch,
From which he's ne'er to rise, took off the sash,
And costly dagger, that thou saw'st him wear,
And thus, unthinking, furnish'd us with arms
Against himself. Steal to the door,
And bring me word, if he be still asleep.

[*Exit AGNES.*

Or I'm deceiv'd, or he pronounc'd himself
The happiest of mankind. Deluded wretch!
Thy thoughts are perishing, thy youthful joys,
Touch'd by the icy hand of grisly death,
Are with'ring in their bloom——But thought extinguish'd

He'll never know the loss,
Nor feel the bitter pangs of disappointment—
Then I was wrong in counting him a wretch:
To die well pleas'd

Is all the happiest of mankind can hope for.
To be a wretch is to survive the loss
Of every joy, and even hope itself,
As I have done—Why do I mourn him then?
For, by the anguish of my tortur'd soul,
He's to be envy'd, if compar'd with me!

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

A Room, with YOUNG WILMOT asleep upon a Bed, in the Distance.

Enter OLD WILMOT and AGNES.

Agnes. The stranger sleeps at present ; but so restless

His slumbers seem, they can't continue long.

Here, I've secur'd his dagger.

O. Wilm. Oh, Agnes ! Agnes ! if there be a hell,
'Tis just we should expect it.

[Goes to take the Dagger, but lets it fall,

Agnes. Shake off this panic, and be more yourself.

O. Wilm. What's to be done ? On what had we determin'd ?

Agnes. You're quite dismay'd.

[Takes up the Dagger.

O. Wilm. Give me the fatal steel.

'Tis but a single murder,

Necessity, impatience, and despair,

The three wide mouths of that true Cerberus,

Grim poverty, demand : they shall be stopp'd,

Ambition, persecution, and revenge,

Devour their millions daily : And shall I—

But follow me, and see how little cause

You had to think there was the least remain

Of manhood, pity, mercy, or remorse,

Left in this savage breast, *[Going the wrong Way.*

Agnes. Where do you go ?

The street is that way.

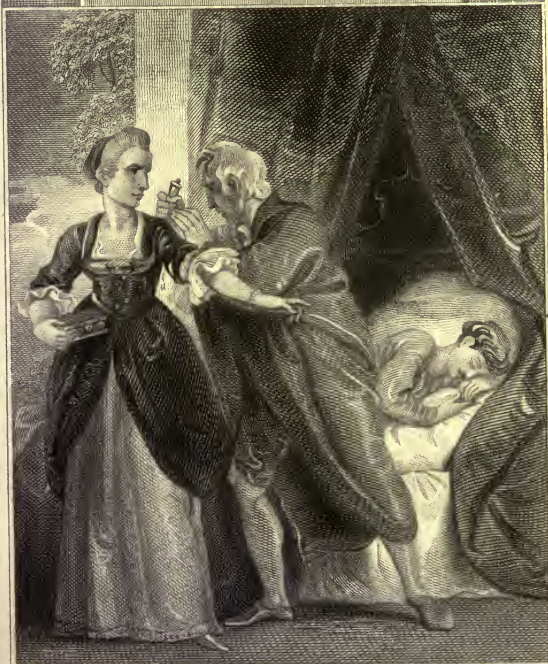
O. Wilm. True ! I had forgot.

Agnes. Quite, quite confounded !

O. Wilm. Well, I recover.—I shall find the way.

[Retires towards the Bed.

FATAL CURIOSITY



AGNES — YOU ARE QUITE DISMAYED.

ACT III.

SCENE II.

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Agnes. Oh, softly! softly! The least noise undoes
us.

What are we doing? Misery and want,
Are lighter ills than this! I cannot bear it!—
Stop, hold thy hand!—Inconstant, wretched wo-
man!

What! doth my heart recoil?—O, Wilmot! Wil-
mot!

What pow'r shall I invoke to aid thee, Wilmot?
[*Scene closes.*]

SCENE III.

Another Room.

Enter CHARLOTTE, EUSTACE, and RANDAL.

Char. What strange neglect? The doors are all un-
barr'd,
And not a living creature to be seen!

Enter OLD WILMOT and AGNES.

Sir, we are come to give and to receive
A thousand greetings—Ha! what can this mean!
Why do you look with such amazement on us?
Are these your transports for your son's return?
Where is my Wilmot?—Has he not been here?
Would he defer your happiness so long,
Or could a habit so disguise your son,
That you refus'd to own him?

Agnes. Heard you that?—
What prodigy of horror is disclosing,
To render murder venial!

O. Wilm. Pr'ythee, peace:
The miserable damn'd suspend their howling,
And the swift orbs are fix'd in deep attention.

Rand. What mean these dreadful words, and frantic air!

That is the dagger my young master wore.

Eust. My mind misgives me. Do not stand to gaze
On these dumb phantoms of despair and horror!
Let us search further; Randal, show the way.

[*Exeunt RANDAL, EUSTACE, and CHARLOTTE.*]

Agnes. Let life forsake the earth, and light the
sun,

And death and darkness bury in oblivion
Mankind and all their deeds, that no posterity
May ever rise to hear our horrid tale,
Or view the grave of such detested parricides!

O. Wilm. Curses and deprecations are in vain:
The sun will shine, and all things have their course,
When we, the curse and burden of the earth,
Shall be absorb'd, and mingled with its dust.
Our guilt and desolation must be told,
From age to age, to teach desponding mortals,
How far beyond the reach of human thought
Heaven, when incens'd, can punish—Die thou first.
[*Stabs AGNES.*]

I durst not trust thy weakness.

Agnes. Ever kind,
But most in this!

O. Wilm. I will not long survive thee.

Agnes. Do not accuse thy erring mother, Wilmot!
With too much rigour, when we meet above.
To give thee life for life, and blood for blood,
Is not enough. Had I ten thousand lives,
I'd give them all to speak my penitence,
Deep, and sincere, and equal to my crime.
Oh, Wilmot! oh, my son! my son!

[*Dies.*]

Enter RANDAL and EUSTACE.

Eust. Oh, Wilmot! Wilmot!
Are these the fruits of all thy anxious cares
For thy ungrateful parents?—Cruel fiends!

O. Wilm. What whining fool art thou, who wouldst
usurp

My sovereign right of grief?—Was he thy son!—
Say! Canst thou show thy hands, reeking with
blood,

That flow'd, through purer channels, from thy loins?
Compute the sands that bound the spacious ocean,
And swell their numbers with a single grain;
Increase the noise of thunder with thy voice;
Or, when the raging wind lays nature waste,
Assist the tempest with thy feeble breath;
But name not thy faint sorrow with the anguish
Of a curs'd wretch, who only hopes from this

[*Stabbing himself.*

To change the scene, but not relieve his pain.

Rand. A dreadful instance of the last remorse!
May all your woes end here!

O. Wilm. O, would they end
A thousand ages hence, I then should suffer
Much less than I deserve. Yet let me say,
You'll do but justice to inform the world;
This horrid deed, that punishes itself,
Was not intended, thinking him our son;
For that we knew not, till it was too late.
Proud and impatient under our afflictions,
While Heaven was labouring to make us happy,
We brought this dreadful ruin on ourselves.
Mankind may learn——but——oh——

[*Dies.*

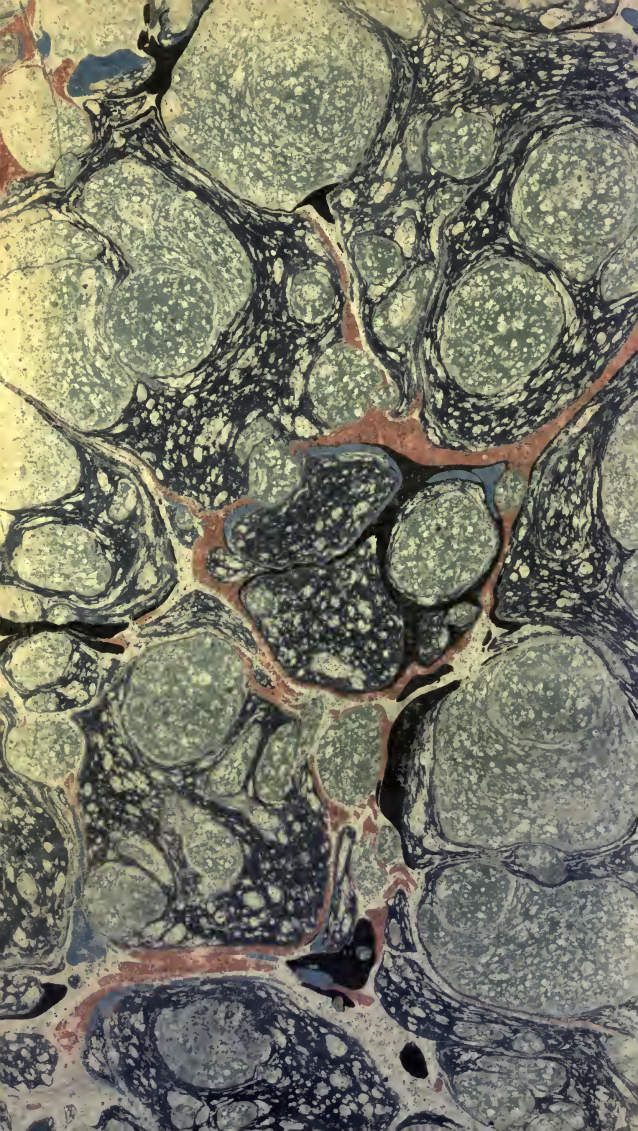
Rand. Heaven grant they may!
And may thy penitence atone thy crime!
Tend well the hapless Charlotte, and bear hence
These bleeding victims of despair and pride;
Toll the death bell! and follow to the grave
The wretched parents and ill-fated son.











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Inchbald, Elizabeth (Simpson)
(ed.)
The British theatre.

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